DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 220 UD 030 122

TITLE	Restructuring To Educate the Urban Learner: Invited Papers.
INSTITUTION	Research for Better Schools, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	93
CONTRACT	RP91002004
NOTE	63p.; United Education Project. For related document, see UD 030 140.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Cultural Pluralism; Economically Disadvantaged; *Educational Change; *Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; *Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Minority Groups; Staff Development; Student Improvement; *Urban Education; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Diversity (Student); Reform Efforts; Research for Better Schools Incorporated

ABSTRACT

The Research for Better Schools Urban Education Project provides a different framework from current education-reform efforts for restructuring urban schools and improving educational quality. This volume organizes a set of invited papers according to the Urban Learner Framework themes of cultural diversity and learning, unrecognized abilities and underdeveloped potential, enhanced achievement through motivation, and effort, and resilience. The decisionmaking framework integrates the new vision of the urban learner, as expressed in four themes with four areas central to the functioning of schools, namely: curriculum, instruction, and assessment; staff development; school environment; and management. Papers and their authors are as follows: (1) "A New Vision of the Urban Learner" (Eric J. Cooper); (2) "Cultural Compatibility and Diversity: Implications for the Urban Classroom" (Roland G. Tharp); (3) "The New Age of Discovery: The Hidden Talents of America's Urban Youth" (Ernesto M. Bernal); (4) "Enhancing Achievement through Expectation and Effort" (Shin-Ying Lee); (5) "Developing Resilience in Youth in Urban America" (Linda F. Winfield); (6) "Linking Urban Students to the 21st Century" (Beau Fly Jones); (7) "Redesigning the 'Vision' through Staff and Professional Development" (Yvette E. Jackson); (8) "The Researching and Inquiring Manager: Responding to the Urban Learner; Working toward Culturally Appropriate Education" (James H. Lytle); and (9) "The Interconnections between Classroom, Cultural, and Natural Systems Ecologies: Understanding the Deep Characteristics of Culture as a Basis of Teacher Decisionmaking in Urban Settings" (C. A. Bowers). References follow each paper. (GLR)

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RESTRUCTURING TO EDUCATE THE URBAN LEARNER:

INVITED PAPERS

1993

Urban Education Project
Research for Better Schools, Inc.
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123

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ABOUT RESEARCH FOR BETTER SCHOOLS AND THE URBAN EDUCATION PROJECT

Research for Better Schools (RBS) is a private, non-profit, educational research and development firm. Our sponsors include many clients from the public and private sectors. RBS has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve as the educational laboratory for the Mid-Atlantic region since 1966.

The present mission of the Urban Education Project builds upon the past experience of RBS. The Project seeks to initiate and support efforts to improve and restructure schooling in urban districts. Emphasis is placed on helping urban educators meet the diverse needs of students by developing an integrated knowledge base which incorporates and disseminates the most current, promising, and pertinent research.

The Urban Education Framework presents ***a new vision of the urban learner*** as culturally diverse, capable, motivated, and resilient (Bernal, 1980; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Tharp, 1989; and Winfield, 1991). This view represents a major paradigm shift in research and theories of intelligence, learning, and instruction that could lead to a new order of results for urban learners. The new view challenges former sweeping generalizations of urban learners as deprived, underachieving, unmotivated, and at-risk. It suggests that urban educators ***build on strengths of the urban learner*** by embracing change that utilizes research on cultural diversity and learning, unrecognized ability and underdeveloped potential, enhancing ability development through motivation and effort, and resilience. The Urban Education Framework is grounded in the belief that ***focused educational change that gives special attention to urban learner issues*** can heighten opportunities for students to achieve academic success and life-long productivity.

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This publication is based on work sponsored, wholly or in part, by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), Department of Education under Contract Number RP91002004. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

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OVERVIEW

Belinda L. Williams
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Urban students are often described as culturally deprived, lacking abilities, unmotivated to learn, and at-risk. These negative characterizations of urban learners represent a view that limits the development of strategies and programs that will improve urban education. Three decades of various efforts designed to remediate deficits (e.g., remediation, tracking, and labeling) have not significantly changed urban achievement and drop-out statistics.

The Research for Better Schools (RBS) Urban Education Project decisionmaking framework for restructuring urban schools represents a paradigm shift that identifies the failure to adequately educate urban children as the failure of educational systems as opposed to a failure of students. The RBS Urban Education Project shares the dismay expressed by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1988) ..."we are deeply troubled that a reform movement launched to upgrade the education of ***all*** students is irrelevant to many children — largely black and Hispanic — in our urban schools." The RBS staff does not believe that current reform strategies focusing on management, collaboration, curriculum, assessment, and standards will address this failure. It is necessary to go beyond current reform efforts to focus specifically on the urban learner.

The RBS decisionmaking framework for restructuring urban education creates a new positive vision of the urban learner as culturally diverse, having unrecognized abilities and underdeveloped potential, motivated to learn, and resilient. This vision can lead to real reform for urban children. The papers included here were presented at a seminar on November 5-6, 1992 in Philadelphia. This event was held to explore and clarify a new vision of the urban learner and to confirm the research-based themes supporting the RBS decisionmaking framework.

The themes used to categorize the research and theory in the Urban Learner Framework include:

- Cultural diversity and learning
- Unrecognized abilities and underdeveloped potential
- Enhancing achievement through motivation and effort
- Resilience

The knowledge base supporting these themes should guide educational planning and restructuring in urban schools.

The decisionmaking framework integrates the new vision of the urban learner, as expressed in the four themes with four areas central to the functioning of schools, namely:

- curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- staff development
- school environment
- management

This integration of the themes with the school functions gives additional guidance to restructuring urban schools and districts.

This volume organizes a set of invited seminar papers according to the Urban Learner Framework themes and the school functions described above. It begins with an introduction by Eric Cooper, Director of the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

In his introductory paper, Cooper, the keynote speaker at the seminar, alerts us to the "urgent need" to challenge current instruction and assessment practices which limit instruction to a focus on isolated skills, knowledge from textbooks, workbook activities and strategies based solely on teacher directed approaches, pullouts, and drill and practice. He calls for a "new vision of instructional reform" which will integrate research on cognition and the developmental experiences of diverse populations through instructional conversations that connect the home and

school. He supports the themes of the RBS framework by recommending that educators must begin to recognize and build on the strengths that urban children bring to the classroom and incorporate the process of learning into the management of schools and environments for learning. "To do less," he warns, "is to have no vision at all."

The next group of four papers clarifies the themes of the RBS framework and helps create a new vision of the urban learner. A brief overview of each follows.

Cultural diversity and learning. In his paper, "Cultural Compatibility and Diversity: Implications for the Urban Classroom," Roland Tharp introduces his hypothesis of cultural compatibility which suggests that education is more effective when compatible with the cultural patterns of learners. He, first, reviews the nature of the evidence and arguments for cultural compatibility in monocultural classrooms and then discusses the principles which apply to multicultural classrooms and urban education. Four variables of cultural compatibility are described: social organization, sociolinguistics, cognition, and motivation.

Unrecognized abilities and underdeveloped potential. "The New Age of Discovery: The Hidden Talents of America's Urban Youth," introduces the issues highlighted by Ernesto Bernal. By expanding on the theory of incompatibilities as introduced by Cardenas & Cardenas (1973) and elaborated by Roland Tharp in this collection of papers Bernal heightens our awareness of the central importance of counteracting the notions of compensatory education by changing the behavior of educators who communicate beliefs that urban learners lack talents. He describes "hidden talents" to mean cognitive as well as personality traits manifested in affective, motivational, personality, and cultural modalities. Hidden strengths such as leadership, interpersonal sensitivities, persistence, humor and a sense of community are defined. The need for a curriculum that is not merely cultural in content but reflects the multicultural traditions of students is proposed.

Enhancing achievement through motivation and effort. In her paper, "Enhancing Achievement through Expectation and Effort," Shin-Ying Lee presents research which suggests the value and importance of reflecting on the practices and beliefs of other cultures to better understand the characteristics of our own practices and to help identify strategies to introduce change. Lee describes two distinctive patterns and aspects of achievement identified when comparing students in Asian classes with American students: (1) expectations and standards, and (2) effort and ability. She concludes that American culture, to a greater degree than Asian culture, emphasizes the importance of innate ability. In Asia, the differences in innate endowment among human beings are not denied, but their significance as a controlling factor is de-emphasized. This greater emphasis on expectations and effort can lead to greater achievement.

Resilience. One outcome of the focus on risk factors in social and ethnic groups is the absence of a systematic understanding of the diverse skills and talents in urban students. Expanding on the notions introduced and described by Roland Tharp and Ernesto Bernal, Linda Winfield in her paper, "Developing Resilience in Youth in Urban America," challenges educators to identify the positive coping and resilience of poor African American children and their families. Winfield introduces a body of research which provides an alternative to current conceptualizations of "risk" and describes individual variation in human responses to risk factors, stress, and adversity. She explains four major processes which categorize the knowledge base on the development of resilience: (1) reduction of negative outcomes by altering either the risk or the child's exposure to risk; (2) reduction of the negative reactions to risk exposure; (3) establishment and maintenance of self-esteem; (4) provision of opportunities for success.

The second group of papers establishes connections between the themes of the Urban Learner Framework as developed by Tharp, Bernal, Lee, and Winfield and the functions of formal schooling. These connections must be understood and systemically institutionalized for current restructuring proposals to effect necessary changes leading to improved academic success for urban students. Brief summaries of the papers follow.

Curriculum, instruction and assessment. Beau Fly Jones identifies two factors which contribute to lower student outcomes in urban and rural cultures: (1) concepts of intelligence, and (2) an absence of a rigorous curriculum. In this paper "Linking Students to the 21st Century," Jones suggests that educators do not believe that all students can learn, or that intelligence can be modified. In addition, assessment instruments and the assessment process limit expectations. A core curriculum that includes algebra, two languages, problem solving, the capability of working independently and collaboratively, entrepreneurship, and a value for diversity is proposed. Jones emphasizes that the most important instructional strategy for urban teachers is the capability to help students link new information to their strengths, prior knowledge, and their cultural experience. She concludes that assessment should not be an add-on, but integrated with curriculum and instruction.

Staff development. The goals of staff and professional development are described by Yvette Jackson as support for enhancing the learning process for staff and students. In her paper, "Redesigning the 'Vision' through Staff and Professional Development," staff development focuses on the educator as a guide for students. Professional development focuses on the educator as the learner. To create environments where teachers are supported to nurture the potential of all children, staff development must include multicultural education, brain-based approaches, interdisciplinary education, and enrichment. Jackson recommends that professional development include personal leadership and collaboration skills.

School environment. In a paper entitled "The Interconnections between Classroom, Cultural, and Natural System Ecologies: Understanding the Deep Characteristics of Culture as a Basis of Teacher Decisionmaking in Urban Settings," C. A. Bowers provides mechanisms for understanding the "deep characteristics" of culture as a basis for teacher decisionmaking in urban settings. Using the metaphor of an "ecology," Bowers describes the classroom as the interaction of message exchanges which constitute communication and learning in urban classrooms. This classroom ecology, he suggests, reflects a larger cultural ecology that includes economic, political, and social patterns. Bowers recommends that bringing together the background knowledge for teacher decisionmaking with knowledge of the students' primary culture should be the focus of teacher education programs. Areas for integrating the formal curriculum and informal student experiences essential in the culturally responsive classroom include: the metaphorical nature of language and thought, the nature of primary socialization and communication, the influence of patterns of relationships and learning, and the balance between solidarity and power in the classroom.

Management. Writing in his paper, "The Researching and Inquiring Manager: Responding to the Urban Learner; Working toward Culturally Appropriate Education," James Lytle proposes that urban principals and middle-management, give support to staff engaged in action research to contribute to the design of culturally appropriate and demonstrably effective educational organizations. Research and inquiry which focuses on students and how they experience schooling are described. Lytle proposes seminars on race and education, shadowing studies, and pairing principals to observe each other. He suggests that these strategies develop characteristics of a learning-to-learn organization.

A thorough understanding of educational change must guide the implementation of the Urban Learner Framework. Systemic change is founded on new assumptions about urban learners and how they learn. It may require, for some individuals, a change in their underlying belief structures. Fully implementing the New Vision is dependent on planning for long-term, multi-year, comprehensive change that affects all levels of the educational system in both policy and practice. Leadership is critical to realizing the New Vision of the Urban Learner and supportive mandates, namely, clear policy directives as well as the time and opportunities to learn new information and skills, are warranted.

A NEW VISION OF THE URBAN LEARNER

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There is an urgent need to address urban school education. Given the changing demographics in this country, there is a need to move beyond the rhetoric of reform to identity and establish schools that work for minority students. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, one out of every three Americans will be non-white, and that one out of every five students in the nation's public schools will be non-white (Hodgkinson, 1988; Boyer, 1987). There is also a need finally to move beyond what have been traditionally identified as "the drivers of educational reform," i.e., standardized tests and curricula that promote memorization rather than reasoning, to more practical suggestions for improving educational experiences for the urban learner (***New York Times,*** October 16, 1992; Cooper & Sherk, 1989).

Traditional approaches continue to force teachers to teach to tests that isolate skills into a mind-dump of confusion for the child, rather than to develop a pathway which can lead to student thoughtfulness and mindfulness (Perkins, 1992). These approaches have been the subject of much discussion and debate, yet they (especially in the urban community) often cloud the ability of educators to identify a clear direction for instructional change, causing many eventually to steer off into an instructional dead end (Levine & Cooper, 1991; Idol & Jones, 1991). This dead end may be partially reflected by the following data:

- Eighty percent of the knowledge students are exposed to comes from textbooks marked by many flaws (Bernstein, 1987).
- A New York public school system discovered that 80 percent of the materials in grades 3 to 12 were inappropriately matched to the needs of their students (Sirois & Davis, 1985).
- Students often spend more time engaged in workbook activities than in instructional activities with their teachers (Osborn & Stein, 1985).
- In an analysis of elementary and secondary instruction, less than one percent of instructional time was devoted to students responding to teacher and student questioning that demanded open responses involving reasoning or opinions. Usual student responses were based solely on informational answers to the teacher's questions (Goodlad, 1984).
- Most Chapter 1 programs for students are based on 30-minute pull-out programs with a focus on low-level learning scripts rather than on appropriate cognitive tasks (Hiebert, Colt, Catto, & Gury, 1992; Cooper & Sherk, 1989).
- Urban students spend more time on basic drill and practice skills than on instruction promoting higher order thinking (Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Hiebert, et al., 1992).

If we are to sustain change in urban systems, we need to move beyond instruction that limits students' academic experiences to the use of poorly developed material, that engages them in seat work that may be improperly designed for their academic needs, or that forces them to attend to a series of activities geared to elicit the simple regurgitation of facts and figures. Implications of the above data indicate that educators need to rethink both how urban classrooms in this country are managed and how they are organized for instruction.

A likely beginning is with the child. It is at this reference point that cognitive research has made the most progress in the past 20 years (Glaser, 1983). Although cognitive research has made many strides in describing what the learner does when he or she reads, plays chess, solves puzzles, or attempts to solve mathematical problems (Fredericksen, 1983), we have only begun to translate such principles of information-processing into wide-scale classroom practice (Idol & Jones, 1991).

Despite all the school reform, restructuring, and educational change which have been proposed since the publication of ***A Nation at Risk***, (1983), very little has translated into systemic change for urban students (Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Cooper & Levine, in press). In fact, the urban communities described by Jonathon Kozol's ***Savage Inequalities*** (1991), continue to expand into what he has described as "death zones" for urban students. Graphically illustrated by Kozol, these zones are life-threatening to children because of the violence, despair, and pollution which encompasses them.

Vision for Urban School Reform

Due to the diverse needs of students in urban environments educators, parents, business and community leaders must expand the vision of what should be done in urban classrooms. Rather than focusing on the traditional approaches, this vision needs to highlight what students have in common, as well as address the patterns of thinking by which people from different cultures, backgrounds, skill levels, exposures, and languages learn to learn in a nourishing environment. This should be the ultimate goal of education. Such learning environments can be the source for a new vision of instructional reform. This reform brings together: research on cognition, an understanding of how students engage themselves in the learning process, the delivery of instruction necessary for diverse populations, the initiation of instructional conversations to connect the home and school, and the use of rich resources which can be more appropriately earmarked for those children most in need.

The proposals for this new vision consolidate guarantees of student competency with support to extend learning to the limits of every child's potential (see work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Feuerstein). To move toward this vision requires a recognition that no one approach to reform will be a panacea for the nation's urban schools and communities. Yet there are specific organizational and instructional arrangements that have proven successful in educating urban disadvantaged students. Eubanks and Levine (1987) have reported that:

> "such arrangements emphasize provision of educational assistance to improve performance through tutoring before school, during lunch, or after school, utilization of trained teachers aides in cognitive theories, reductions of non-essential time in coursework which does not link with cognitive and interdisciplinary instruction, and formation of smaller in-class groups for low achievers than for other students..." (p. 22).

Hiebert, Colt, Catto, and Gury (1992) suggest that Chapter 1 programs should provide more intensive instruction for students in the first year of schooling, and they also suggest "reorganization of the curriculum and instruction of preschool through grade five, provide family support programs and a school site facilitator to work with teachers on implementation of change" (p. 546).

Other researchers such as Bloom (1988) and Comer (1987) describe the importance of linking the home and school in a partnership based on instruction (e.g., graded homework which has been shown to improve student achievement; programs which allow students to spend two years with the same teacher, offsetting the discontinuity in the lives of many low-income children; social programs which are carried out by parents and teachers working collaboratively; and the use of programs that develop automaticity in reading through home and school cooperation).

These, and other approaches which are well reported in the research literature must be applied in a cohesive and coordinated manner, if we ever can hope to achieve systemic reforms in urban schools. Predictable obstacles, such as tests and textbooks which lead to fragmented instruction and repetitive drill and practice; school realities that stress classroom order and passive learning; student and teacher compromises that trade obedience for understanding instruction; low-level learning scripts for low achievers and teacher preferences for easy-to-teach lessons; must also be addressed if we are to witness systemic change (Levine & Cooper, 1991).

To reach systemic reform in urban communities, it is recognized that many interrelated criteria will have to be addressed. A framework developed by Research for Better Schools (1992) is student-centered and illustrates such intervening factors as school environment, culture, management, staff development, curriculum, instruction and assessment. These factors provide a lens for viewing the school and student as a complex unit of a broader learning community.

Realities of Urban Education

There are a few urban stories where educational improvements have occurred in spite of the predictable obstacles, issues, and considerations that frustrate change (Cooper & Sherk, 1989). But, for these few positive examples, there are countless more negative experiences — for the vast majority of urban students, obstacles to learning have dramatically increased (Kozol, 1991). For the children who live in an increasingly dangerous environment, learning becomes secondary to survival (Kozol, 1991; Kotlowitz, 1991).

And yet, in spite of the dangers they face every day — urban students come to the schools seeking an oasis — a place where they hope they will be nurtured and taught. Many do obtain the embrace of the safety they seek, only then to face additional dynamics which can interfere with their learning. It is sadly ironic that learning can be so completely frustrated by community attitudes which promote segregation and discrimination. These experiences are powerful reminders for the students of urban schools that America maintains dual systems — one for the haves and one for the have-nots (Kozol, 1991).

Overcoming this reality requires a renewed effort by community representatives, parents, and educators to develop the resilience in our youth enabling them to overcome the lack of educational resources, job opportunities, incentives, and support. The teaching of resilience, when combined with improvements in the management of schooling, can begin to narrow the gap between hope and ultimate success.

Rethinking Classroom Instruction

Children in urban schools lose valuable instructional time working on mastery of the so-called basics, while children in other schools are exposed to interdisciplinary instruction from subject fields that will be studied throughout the school years (Ogle, 1988). Additionally, many teachers of the urban students, treat them with low expectations — perpetuating a self-fulfilling prophecy that since urban students are disadvantaged, unruly, unsocialized, and slow, they surely cannot be taught to learn (Cooper & Sherk, 1989).

To reverse lowered expectations for urban students, educators must begin to recognize and build on the strengths that urban children bring to the classroom. The recommendations which follow are aimed at supporting a new vision of the urban learner:

- Recognize the vast intrapersonal knowledge urban students bring to the classroom. The understanding of central themes, e.g., differences between good and evil, love and hate, life and death, in life is acutely honed by the urban child. These themes also occur in expository and narrative texts — by teaching students to recognize the background knowledge they bring into the classroom and the existence of these themes in text structures, students gain access to how thoughts are conveyed by authors.

- Shape the language patterns developed in urban environments so that they become useful to the child in learning, particularly in learning from text. Build activities which help the students to compare and contrast "street English" with standard English.

- Use collaborative learning strategies which build on the social patterns found in urban communities. Instructional strategies which force the students to work alone most of the time will not work well for students from highly interactive environments.

- Allow students to examine the structure of textual material before detailed reading takes place, e.g., identify text structure characteristics such as problem/solution, compare/contrast, enumeration, concept sequencing, and cause and effect.

- Provide expository as well as narrative text selections for elementary students. By providing expository text selections in the earlier grades, the teacher facilitates student readiness for course demands at the secondary level.

- Help the students illustrate how they achieved an answer, as well as identify the specific answer. The use of cognitive maps and graphic organizers can help students illustrate their organizational reasoning.

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- Focus on higher-level learning tasks, e.g., problem solving, analysis, critical, reflective and creative thinking. Recognize that the urban student has developed a strong sense of problem solving through the interactions demanded in the urban environment. Provide opportunities for directing this experience through academic activities which prepare them for the changing demands of the 21st century workplace. This focus requires the urban educator to present initial basic skills in the context of developing sophisticated, more cognitively-oriented classrooms.

- Use thematic approaches to instruction which allow the student to see the application of theories in practice. Through interdisciplinary projects, teach the interrelationships of broad principles, e.g., the application of concepts from algebra, geometry, and calculus can be used for answering questions about building construction, and the speed of a falling object (Feuerstein, 1990; Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Palincsar & Brown, 1985; Presseisen, 1988).

We recognize that every student can be taught to learn. Many of us have learned to confront the factors that have led to not recognizing the potential of a child. The challenge we all face today is how this recognition can be translated into success for all. For every educator who has succeeded with urban students, there are dozens who have not.

Should we so choose to incorporate the processes of learning into the management of schools and environments for learning, urban students will be taught in ways which will enable them to overcome the "savage inequalities" in their communities (Levin, 1992; Cooper & Sherk, 1989; George, Mosley, & Ogle, 1992; Kozol, 1991). To do less is to have no vision at all.

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CULTURAL COMPATIBILITY AND DIVERSITY
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE URBAN CLASSROOM

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The hypothesis of ***cultural compatibility*** (Tharp 1989b) suggests that education is more effective when compatible with culture patterns. The hypothesis has an extensive and growing research base in child education (Tharp, 1989a), a modest one in child mental health (Tharp, 1991), and a beginning in child-community psychology (O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990).

Because so much of the evidence for cultural compatibility's effectiveness has come from rural and/or Native American populations, there is some question about the applications to urban, and particularly African American schooling. My purpose is here to review the nature of the evidence and arguments for cultural compatibility, so the audience may judge whether further research and experimentation for urban populations might be warranted.

The structure of this paper is first to present a sample of the cultural compatibility principles and evidence. This evidence has been developed primarily in and for ***monocultural*** classrooms. The second part of the paper will be a discussion of principles that apply to ***multicultural*** classrooms.

Cultural Compatibility

A few years ago (Tharp, 1989a), I wrote that the energy of those interested in African American educational improvement has been channeled mostly into desegregation, and into equal treatment for all students; and that most Hispanic attempts at education reform have been directed toward issues in bilingualism, particularly toward issues of English acquisition, Spanish use, and/or preservation, and improvement both of ESL pedagogy and of school attitudes toward bilingualism. Further, most inquiries into the schooling experiences of Asian-American students were concentrated on parent-child relationships. The cultural compatibility movement has been largely centered in Native American communities.

The intervening years have produced some changes, though not so many as I hoped. Some few studies of the particularities of the African American children in classrooms have been added (e.g., Allen & Boykin, 1991), but this rich research-and-development opportunity (outlined by Shade in 1982) remains largely unexplored, apparently due to the belief by the majority of African American educators that standard education is the only assurance of fair education.

Thus, the preponderance of evidence for cultural issues in education came from classrooms of Native Americans in western United States and Canada, Alaska, and Hawaii. A major source of theory, research, and demonstration was the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), which over a 20-year period developed and studied a culturally-compatible K–6 language arts program for children of Hawaiian ancestry (Tharp, Jordan, Speidel, Au, Klein, Sloat, Calkins, & Gallimore, 1984). The KEEP group also operated a research-and-development site on the Navajo reservation of northern Arizona for six years. Selected because of the sharp contrast of ecocultural stetting of the two cultures, Navajo and Hawaiian versions of the KEEP program emerged with clear differences.

The evidence for the compatibility hypothesis can be discussed under the headings of four classes of variables that have been most studied in the conscious tailoring of classrooms to children of different cultures: (1) social organization, (2) sociolinguistics, (3) cognition, and (4) motivation. In this brief paper, I will discuss only the first two, because they are the two on which there is some evidence relevant to urban African American students. A full discussion of the four variables can be found in Tharp (1989; 1991).

Social Organization

The typical North American classroom uses primarily whole class organization, with rank and file seating and a teacher-leader who assigns text, instructs or demonstrates to the whole group, followed by some form of individual practice, and then teacher-organized individual assessment. This system is not the most effective for the students from all cultures. For many, it produces a low level of child attention to teachers and classwork, which is disturbing to teachers, who attribute the problem to low academic motivation, rather than to an alien social organization (Tharp & Gallimore, 1976).

In the culturally-compatible KEEP program, a small-group classroom organization was designed for Hawaiian children. The teacher engaged in an intense instructional conversation with a small group of students, while the majority of mixed-sex and mixed-ability students worked in independent groups of four to five. A peer teaching-learning interaction occurred there every three minutes per child in kindergarten; in the first grade, once every two and one-half minutes.

The KEEP group, in its comparison study, introduced this identical pattern of classroom organization into a Northern Arizona Navajo classroom. Navajo children also worked diligently in the independent work groups ("centers"). However, they worked much more independently, with few instances of offering or requesting peer assistance. In adult Navajo society, male and female roles are clearly defined and separate. Around the age of eight, boys and girls are cautioned against playing with each other. In the Navajo classroom, only when the groups were reorganized as same-sex did peer assistance become frequent (Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987).

Minority children all have social skills and problem-solving abilities, though they may take several forms, depending on culture. These skills can be brought into play by creating compatible social organizations of the classroom. Ethnographic work in urban Black ghetto schools described students' intense and sensitive peer relationships, physical expressiveness, and their skillful manipulations of the behavioral dynamics of their classrooms. The staging of impromptu "dramas," designed to tease, test, and sometimes to intimidate teachers, was a frequent technique (Williams, 1981).

> These skills are not developed in ghetto schools, but are suppressed and interpreted as delinquency. ...Left undeveloped, these skills get more disruptive... and can reach a level where they appear to be violent rebellions (Williams, 1981, p. 214).

By creating settings using group interaction and competitions, these tendencies can be brought into instructional use. Front-of-the-class performances related to instructional goals, with the balance of the class attentive to discover errors that will allow them to replace the performers, were highly motivating for individual "performers" and "audience" alike (Williams, 1981).

Sociolinguistics

The ***courtesies and conventions of conversation*** are among the most powerful differentiating elements of culture. Critical differences exist across cultures, and between many cultural groups and the classrooms in which their children are educated. When violations of the expectations of either teacher or children occur, it results in anger, alienation, or withdrawal.

Narrative Style. Michaels (1984) has shown that children of different cultures tell stories in different ways, with startling audience effects. In her study, white children were topic-centered in their narratives, with thematic cohesion and a temporal reference. Black children used a topic-associating style, consisting of a series of implicitly associated anecdotal segments with no explicit statement of an overall theme or point. White adults (including teachers) criticized the topic-associating style as incoherent, but Black adults found it interesting with lots of detail and description. It is apparent that this cultural difference in basic language structure can lead to quite different judgments and predictions in the classroom, with consequences often bewildering to both teachers and children.

Wait Time. Wait Time I is the amount of time given by teachers for students to respond to questioning; Wait Time II is the amount of time following a student response before the teacher again speaks (Rowe, 1974). Wait times are to some degree culture-dependent. White and Tharp (1988) investigated differences in wait time

between an Anglo and a Navajo teacher of the same Navajo third-grade students; the Navajo teacher had considerably longer Wait Time II than did the Anglo. What was perceived by the Anglo teacher as a completed response was often intended by the child only as a pause, which the Anglo teacher interrupted. Even in college, Indian students report that short wait time in seminar interactions is still a difficulty for them (Leacock, 1976).

On the other hand, Native Hawaiian children have a characteristic negative wait time in informal settings, a pattern that produces overlapping speech, and which demonstrates involvement and relationship (White & Tharp, 1988). In classrooms, this is interpreted by other culture teachers as rude interruption. Schools' attempts to curtail this overlapping speech only results in inhibiting participation of Hawaiian children in instructional activities.

Rhythm. Pioneering work in the sociolinguistic consequences of teacher/child interaction was done by Erickson and Mohatt (1977), in their classic report of an Indian teacher/student classroom that followed a slow, fluid, rhythmic tempo in the presentation of materials, in the voice inflections and vocalization tempo on the parts of both teacher and students, and even in the pace of movement in the classroom. The homes of some of those students revealed similar patterns. When this rhythm went unnoticed and was disrupted by an Anglo teacher, a more disorganized and less efficient pattern of interaction, as well as a lower level of rapport between teacher and students, resulted.

For African American classrooms, a quite different rhythmic structure has been proposed for promoting teacher-student rapport (Hale, 1982). Hale suggests that effective speech rhythms during instruction by teachers of Black children would be much like the rhythmic pattern of mother-child interaction, a "contest" style in which mother and child volley rhythmically. The child is encouraged to be assertive and to develop an individual style. Many African American mothers give directions for household tasks to their children in a rhythm that approximates the call-and-response patterns found in black music (Young, 1970). Hale (1982) and Wharton-Boyd (1983) both suggest that classroom teaching patterns could be based on these call-and-response children's singing games.

Participation Structures. The KEEP "talk-story" pattern of classroom discourse was developed to counter the phenomenon that in ordinary classrooms, Hawaiian children are "non-verbal," and seldom ask questions. But there is a frequently enjoyed speech event in adult Hawaiian culture, called "talk-story." KEEP created classroom participation structures that would emulate those "talk-story" patterns, and thus increase child fluency and participation. Each day each child meets in a small group with the teacher for a 20-minute discussion of some text. There are rapid-fire responses, liveliness, mutual participation, interruptions, overlapping volunteered speech, and joint narration. Au and Mason (1981) found higher rates of academically productive student behavior in these talk-story-like participation structures.

In the Navajo version of KEEP instructional conversations, each student speaks for longer periods, while other students wait courteously. Ideas are developed with greater leisure, and are often individualistic, rather than tied to statements of previous speakers.

When school sociolinguistic patterns are incompatible with natal culture patterns — for example, when the teachers use the "switchboard" pattern of interaction — many Indian culture children develop patterns of short answers, interruptions, and silence, which by high school have calcified into a controlling and resentful repertoire of hostility (Greenbaum & Greenbaum, 1983).

When sociolinguistic school/home compatibilities are present, children are more comfortable, participate, and display their abilities appropriately. Another instance is Lein's study of black migrant children. Teachers found them below grade level and unresponsive.

But at home and in the community, these same children speak and act in complex and competent ways. At home and at church, the expectations are similar; therefore, at church they exhibit full competence and full participation. This can offer an example to schools of how formal institutions can engage their young by compatibilities of expectations with child repertoires (Lein, 1975).

In summary, there is evidence that cultural differences in social organization, socialinguistics, cognition, and motivation, when reflected in compatibilities in classroom practices, make for classrooms that are endorsed by culture members and other students of those cultures, are associated with greater child participation and

enjoyment, and produce classrooms that are discernibly different for students of different cultures. In the culture and education movement, most compatibilities have been established through ***choosing established modalities*** which, per se, allow for greater influence of the child's culture, or at least do not demand incompatible child behavior. This is the "least change" principle (Tharp, et al., 1984) which calls for not inventing entire new pedagogies or teaching modalities, but the careful selection of modalities may be quite different for children of different cultures, and it is certain that the instantiation of the modalities will be modified by contextualizing them in the experience and language of the children's daily lives.

Principles for Multicultural Classrooms

Although the cultural compatibility research base has been developed by examination of monocultural classrooms, it is possible to look at these studies of many minority cultures in another way. That is, are there any uniformities among the recommendations of those researchers who have studied African American, American Indian, Eskimo, Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, and all the other culture-school relationships? Indeed there are. In fact, remarkable similarities are present in the recommendations. Another way of phrasing the issue is this: the four variables for which research is reported above are those which, if incompatible, can divide and interfere with progress among members of the learning community. The four principles discussed in this section are educational processes that can unite the members of the community, or at least minimize the impact of their cultural differences. The list has been developed by examining existing literature and by assembling the recommendations, research results, advice of experts, and case study implications that are now available to scholarship.

I. ***To the extent that cultural diversity is present, it is more critical that developing competence in the language of instruction is a metagoal of all instructional activities of the school day.***

II. ***To the extent that cultural diversity is present, it is more critical that teaching, curriculum, and the school itself are contextualized in the experiences, skills, and values of the community.***

III. ***To the extent that cultural diversity is present, it is more critical that teaching and learning occur in contexts of joint productive activity with peers and teachers.***

IV. ***To the extent that cultural diversity is present, it is more critical that the basic form of teaching is through dialogue between teacher and learners — through the Instructional Conversation.***

These four principles are related, and form one holistic view of education for classrooms of diversity. That is, the ***instructional conversation*** is the best method for ***development of the language*** of instruction, which occurs best when ***contextualized*** in experience, the ideal form of which is by creating ***joint productive activity***, which — completing the circle — becomes the setting for the ***instructional conversation.*** These principles distill the uniform research and experience of those who have worked in schooling of ***monocultural*** minority and of multicultural ***and*** of linguistically ***diverse*** classrooms.

Are these principles valid only for minority students? Far from it! Indeed, the principles are entirely consistent with natural teaching and learning, as practices by homosapiens traditionally, in all informal community, cultural, productive, and familial settings since the dawn of time and on every continent. The principles may also be used to describe most-effective education of majority-culture students, too. Traditional North American education, however, has not practiced such education, because the schools have relied on the uniform family and community experiences of the majority-culture adults to provide the activity, the conversation, the language development, and the shared context upon which the schools could depend. This is no longer true, in culturally and linguistically diverse nations. The schools must now provide the common experience, activity, language and conversation that learners require, both for individual development and the development of a common, shared, and mutually endorsed community.

Adherence to these four principles will not remove the cultural differences that divide teachers and students. But classrooms so organized will provide the common understanding and shared experiences upon which unity can be expanded. They will provide common experiences upon which a new classroom convention and courtesy can be built. In short, these principles do not dissolve children's cultures; rather, they describe the

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best known available means of creating a new culture of the school which will move toward unity through a new created microculture of the school.

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THE NEW AGE OF DISCOVERY: THE HIDDEN TALENTS OF AMERICA'S URBAN YOUTH

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Introduction

As I begin my presentation today I am aware that the path that I have chosen — to try to identify some of the hidden talents of urban youth — is littered with the vanquished bones of many theorists. Indeed, the early efforts to identify and construct so called "culture-free" tests of academic ability or aptitude are part of this tradition (see Anastasi, 1985), as has been the entire course of compensatory education, which dates back to the mid-1960s.

These efforts, furthermore, have frequently been linked to the question of institutional change. As early as 1973, Cardenas & Cardenas set forth their ambitious (and slightly over-stated) ***Theory of Incompatibilities,*** which sought to identify certain key characteristics of minority populations, particularly language-minority populations, and showed how the characteristics of the schools (school culture) and the demand characteristics of their curricula and educational ambiance were incongruent with the traits and expectations that minority children brought to school. Their idea was to construct or reform a school system to more closely conform to and reflect the traits these children possess, and indeed this approach was the basis of Edgewood ISD's (San Antonio) securing an Experimental Schools' grant in the mid 1970s.

In modern times, the work of Henry Levin (1987) has inspired the whole notion of accelerated learning, new programs utilizing new methods and having high levels of expectation of student performance to counteract the notion of compensatory education. While this notion is not particularly new among many educators who were frustrated by the entire movement of compensatory education, which inherently denigrated the "culturally deprived" children and at best let them be "culturally and economically disadvantaged," few schools were ever successful at adopting drastically different methods, even those with real promise, such as bilingual education. Perhaps this is because regular education continues to be the touchstone of "real" education, and its status is basically unshakable. We hope that Levin's accelerated learning does better.

As a result, we are seeking to reform not only the public schools but also the initial preparation of teachers. Preservice training methods, such as field-based preparation programs, will alter the traditional orientation of teacher-education programs and better prepare new teachers to work with the realities of the field (Holmes Group, 1990), realities which inherently reflect greater participation of non-dominant ethnic minority children and greater economic discrepancies between the haves and the have-nots. Graduates of these programs will know how to work effectively with urban youth.

The Approach of Hidden Talents

In an attempt to blend the best of all of these approaches, while avoiding the pitfalls of denigrating or condescending attempts to dilute the regular education curriculum, we are going to take a somewhat different definition of what we mean by hidden talents and hope to miss the land mine of stereotyping lower class children. Mindful, too, of Gordon's (1982) warning that the positive characteristics of urban youth "vary as much within this group as they do between lower and higher status groups," we have, nevertheless, cast these hidden talents in the vernacular so that they may be recognizable to all, in the belief that many educators do not behave toward these youth as if they had any talents whatsoever. In this essay we are taking hidden talents to mean those cognitive and personality traits upon which curricular efforts (interventions) can be realistically based. I wish to emphasize that these characteristics are not merely cognitive, but reflect my own culture's perspective that success in cognitive endeavors reflects a complex configuration of traits. Similarly, the suggestions that we reach will also integrate affective, motivational, and cognitive strategies, as well as personality variables and cultural modalities.

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Hidden Academic Strengths

Baytops (1992) talks about minority students whose strengths have permitted them in the ethnic groups from which they stem to survive — even thrive — in a racist society. The following is but a partial enumeration, hopefully capturing most of the important hidden academic strengths of minority youth. This listing has deliberately not been "factor analyzed" or condensed, so that we may more easily reflect upon the riches that are "out there."

1. ***Leadership.*** Even the poor have access to other children, though they may not have access to books, computers, and educational media. Leadership is a trait that many minority youth develop and that most of them respect.

2. ***Personalized motivational styles.*** Abstract, or better, depersonalized appeals are not nearly as effective as personalized messages. Many minority students respond to people that they like and who like them.

3. ***Sensitivity to interpersonal messages.*** There is really no need to "push" minority youngsters, contrary to popular thought. If they are interested, or become interested, they will establish long-term educational goals and follow them.

4. ***The need to*** be ***somebody.*** This is an urban version of need achievement. What these children ***become*** may be dependent in large manner on us.

5. ***Persistence.*** Urban youth know how to "hang in there." It's the direction of the persistence, not a lack of motivation, that schools need to address.

6. ***Responsibility.*** Many urban youth accept familial responsibilities, including work, while seeming to be irresponsible and lazy in school. Responsibility is not a stranger to most of these youth.

7. ***Confidence, a conviction that success is possible with opportunity.*** Urban youth are not always certain about the importance of all of the courses they are required to take to their lives, but they do know that if formal education can open some doors for them, that they will succeed.

8. ***Risk-taking abilities for personal advancement.*** Urban youth who are very mentally healthy have an ability to take high risks to get personal satisfaction or vocational advancement.

9. ***The adoption of reasonable academic goals.*** Not all of the youth share the same academic ambitions that we as educators have for them, but many youngsters adopt reasonable goals within their risk-taking abilities and within the estimation within their own capabilities. If we want youngsters to achieve more, they must develop some sense that our goals for them are attainable.

10. ***Practicality, a commitment to what is real.*** Minority children are understandably concerned with the reality that they must survive every day. Accordingly, education must address these practical matters if it ever hopes to engage these youngsters routinely in more abstract, less immediate exercises of cognitive ability. Alternatively, educators can demonstrate how what they wish to teach has real life application to urban youth.

11. ***Intellectual and philosophical traditions, including wisdom.*** This is an area that goes almost totally unrecognized by the dominant culture except, perhaps, when they pick up some line such as, "Whatever goes around comes around." The intellectual and philosophical traditions of the groups within urban society need to be studied and appreciated and modeled within the schools.

12. ***Combining thinking and feeling.*** Emotionless thought does not make an awful lot of sense in the intellectual traditions of most minority cultures. Thinking, creating, leading, planning, evaluating — all of these have affective components that normally help motivate and celebrate cognitive accomplishments.

13. ***Kinesthetic modalities of learning.*** Urban youth really learn by doing, especially when doing means direct physical involvement in the manipulation of objects that represent ideas.

14. ***Artistry.*** There is an especially profound appreciation of art forms that communicate life and philosophical wisdom.

15. ***Visualization.*** Many urban youth have highly cultivated imaginations that utilize visualization to a high extent, a cognitive trait which helps organize their skills and integrate these with their expectations for themselves.

16. ***Imaginativeness.*** The ability to dream and to elaborate upon experiences are cognitive traits that are not often capitalized upon.

17. ***Expressive verbal skills.*** These skills are important not only for survival but for the expression and sharing of some of the other cognitive traits, including imaginativeness, visualization, leadership, and wisdom.

18. ***Style, especially creative personal expression.*** Urban kids may seem tony or trendy, but most of them really admire distinctive and creative personal styles within the bounds of current fashion and acceptable behavior.

19. ***Social charm, warmth, and helpfulness.*** This is common trait for all youth, and while its expression may be culturally determined, the traits are well regarded in the community.

20. ***Humor.*** Another strong culture-bound trait, humor is related both to the intellectual traditions of the inner-city as well as to the various forms of personal expression.

21. ***A sense of community.*** This is a notion of belonging to a socio-geographical unit. While this can be "turf" for some, it is home to others, and this establishes itself as in the case of the recent rebellion in Los Angeles, where eventually the sense of community asserted itself and the violence came to an end.

Curricular Implications of Hidden Talents

A review of these hidden talents suggests that urban youth could respond well to teachers, curricula, and school settings with the following complementary characteristics:

1. ***A curriculum that is not merely cultural in content but that also reflects the multicultural traditions of its students.*** For example, it might be healthy to introduce the notion of cooperation in addition to the usual line about competition to meet one's personal needs. Similarly, it might be good to represent in everyday activities within the school and classroom a different definition of an educated person, one that incorporates emotional enthusiasm — even celebration — of intellectual accomplishments. Cooperative (student-team) learning has real possibilities here as well.

2. ***To present a curriculum in which some minority children, say bilingual children, have a distinct advantage, not one in which they always sense that they are "coming from behind."*** Spanish-speakers, for instance, should have a vista open to them that incorporates the very rich world literature in that language, as well as the more current literary contributions of Hispanics in the United States. More importantly, white students should have the option to learn Spanish as a second language in order to learn about and from their Hispanic peers.

3. ***Higher-order thinking skills could well be cultivated in this proposed blend of thinking and feeling by posing real problems to be solved,*** perhaps even campus-based problems, where students' suggestions are derived through the application of different disciplines and are taken seriously by teachers and administrators alike. Realistic, relevant curriculum that introduces academic rigor through inherently integrative topics such as child care, response to violence, alcoholism, AIDS, a study of gangs, drug cartels and international economics — these are but some of the topics that, at different age levels, could attract and keep student interest while introducing high levels of academic rigor.

Some themes — such as Afro-Caribbean influences on Latino Music — might get diverse minority groups to dialogue with one another.

4. ***Practice what you preach.*** In my opinion, nothing undermines American education as much as American educators, for we often fail to model what we profess. The elementary teacher of reading who himself does not read, the middle school teacher of history who never researches or visits historical spots, and the high school teacher of mathematics who herself never finds realistic expressions for her skills outside the classroom — these personal short falls engender no enthusiasm in the teachers, much less in the students from urban schools.

5. ***Forge new partnerships between the public schools and departments/schools/ colleges of education.*** These partnerships would be for the expressed purposes of (1) recruiting teachers in a selective fashion, (2) better preparing and socializing preservice teachers and (3) inspiring and changing inservice teachers (Bernal, 1992). How does one institutionalize the integrative, thematic curriculum? Collaboratively (Cushman, 1990). We instill it — insist upon it — with preservice teachers and introduce it into the field by placing these interns in classrooms with teachers who may not yet have mastered the technique. To support this reform, professors of education move their classes into the schools, where they can assist teachers and other professionals learn about and practice new technologies and techniques and help with such matters as the induction of new teachers, while they themselves get back in touch with children and conditions in the schools.

6. ***Aim not for educational reform but for revolution!*** To effect such an ambitious goal, we need to utilize hot media. It would not be difficult, however. Just think about the very popular coffee commercials that in 30-second spot formats released sequentially every few weeks sell the product through a serialized flirtation between a man and a woman — micro-soap operas! I call for national and state efforts to put on 30-second, prime-time TV spots to raise the consciousness not only of the public but also of our educators. No ordinary public service announcements, these spots would dramatize through well scripted and staged scenarios examples of bad teaching and good teaching, would give the lie to popular excuses for not bringing about effective practices such as, "The state department of education won't let us do that," and would guide parents how not to miss "teachable moments" at home and how to advocate for their children at school. In short, such programs would have the dual purpose of training educators and empowering the public with ***valid*** alternatives to inaction or feckless action. For a revolution to succeed it must have a popular base, not a specialized base. And it must have a positive goal. Negative images of education, such as ***A Nation at Risk***, will not suffice.

Conclusion

It is rarely acknowledged that the dominant ethnic group can learn something from the non-dominant ethnic populations (Dabney, 1991). But hidden strengths imply that urban youth have something to share with the population at large. To capitalize upon these special talents, however, takes a very special commitment and a very special realization that schools must be prepared to build upon the learning and motivational characteristics of the students that they teach. Unfortunately, however, the tradition of the United States has been quite different in that the public schools have always assumed that children must conform to their established ways of doing things.

I am of the belief that we can achieve both equity and excellence in education, but only if we can muster the imagination to teach inner-city youth in ways that bear upon their own strengths and talents. To do this we must create new curricula, new systems of parental involvement, and new appeals to the imagination of urban youth based upon a commitment to cultivate ourselves personally and professionally as we go about our daily lives in our schools and in our communities. Perhaps this is the right time, as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Age of Discovery, to find, mine, and invest the hidden talents of America's urban youth.

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ENHANCING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH EXPECTATION AND EFFORT

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The effectiveness of American education system has been challenged in recent years by the consistent reports that in academic knowledge American students are lagging behind their peers in many other countries. The achievement gap in mathematics between American students and their Japanese and Chinese counterparts was evident as early as first grade (Stevenson, et al., 1990a; Stevenson, et al., 1990b; Stigler, Lee & Stevenson, 1990). In spite of the education reform movement in recent years, this gap not only has persisted throughout the last decade among elementary school students, but also among high school students where an even wider disparity between the average performance of the American and of the Chinese and Japanese students occurred (Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1992). How can we account for this poor showing of American students? And, most importantly, what can we do to improve the achievement of the American students?

Results from cross-cultural comparative studies are sometimes criticized for their lack of relevance for making suggestions for American education. The cultural context of the United States is claimed to be very different from other countries in that it is more diverse in race, ethnicity, and social and cultural background. Nevertheless, it is often through the reflection on practices and beliefs of other cultures that we can better realize the characteristics of our own practices which could then help us to offer suggestions for making changes.

In the series of studies conducted at the University of Michigan, data were collected from several urban metropolitan cities: Chicago and Minneapolis, Sendai (Japan), Taipei (Taiwan), and Beijing (mainland China). We worked with education authorities in each location to select the full range of schools and large number of students needed in order to achieve a representative sample. Because elementary education is part of compulsory education in all of the cities we visited, the samples were composed of students from heterogeneous, socioeconomic, and family backgrounds representative of urban centers. In order to investigate attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to children's academic achievement, parents and children were interviewed and hundreds of hours of classroom observation were conducted (Stevenson, et al. 1990c; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

In addition to the overall findings that American students, on the average, are lagging behind their Asian counterparts in mathematics achievement, closer examination of the results showed two distinctive patterns of achievement outcomes when comparing American and Asian students. First, the percentage of students achieving at grade level was much lower among the American students than among the Asian students. Because the mathematics tests used in the studies were constructed based on analyses of the textbooks used in each of the locations, it was possible to examine the achievement outcomes according to grade level attained by the students. The results showed that while more than 70 percent of the first-grade students in each of these three Asian cities were achieving at their grade level, only 42 percent of the American first-grade students in Chicago were doing the same. For fifth graders, 70 percent of the Asian students and less than 25 percent of the students in Chicago were competent at their grade level.

The second characteristic of the achievement performance of American students was the greater diversity among the schools. While students in individual Asian classes come from as diverse educational backgrounds as students in American classes, the gaps among achievement level of the different schools within the Asian cities were smaller than that of Chicago schools. For example, the difference between the first-grade class with the highest average score and the one with the lowest score within each of the three Asian locations was about three points. This difference was more than eight points in Chicago. For fifth-grade classes, the gap was less than five points in Taipei and Sendai, nine points in Beijing, and fifteen points in Chicago.

Many factors could account for the achievement differences. Two aspects are discussed below.

Expectation and Standard

One of the dismaying and consistent findings in the studies was the high level of satisfaction expressed by American mothers when they were asked about their children's academic achievement. Few Chinese and Japanese mothers, but over 40 percent of American mothers, expressed high degrees of satisfaction with their

children's academic performance; over 80 percent of the American mothers expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school in educating their children.

The level of satisfaction of American mothers is surprising because they seemed to be aware of the country's low status in comparative academic studies. When mothers were asked to rank the mathematics performance of American students among eight industrialized countries, American mothers estimated that American students' scores would fall between sixth and seventh place. American parents, therefore, appeared to be aware that American education is in trouble, but did not ascribe the phenomenon to their own children. It seems that parents were blaming the problems on other children and other schools, instead of addressing the issues involved themselves.

The lower standard held by American parents for their children's academic achievement became obvious when comparisons were made with standards Asian parents set for their children. When mothers were asked, "Let's say there is a math test in which there are 100 points. The average score is 70. What score do you think your child would get? What score would you be satisfied with?" Mothers in all locations expected their child would receive an above-average score. However, American mothers said they would be satisfied with the score they expected their child would receive, whereas Chinese and Japanese mothers required a score higher than the expected score to be satisfied. Similar results were found when we asked the same questions of fathers and students and when the questions pertained to reading as well as mathematics. Americans consistently indicated that the score with which they would be satisfied was about the same as or lower than the score they expected their children or they themselves would receive. Asian parents and students, on the other hand, would always require a score higher than the expected one to be satisfied. It is in this essence that Asian students are constantly inspired and motivated to do better than they currently do.

When we asked students to express if they have lived up to the expectation of their parents and teachers, the American students felt they have much more than the Chinese and Japanese students. It is unlikely that the American students would exert themselves further when they already felt strongly about doing as well as they were expected to. American parents and teachers are concerned about developing children's positive self image and they seem to be doing it by lowering the standard and expectation for their children.

Effort and Ability

One important cultural value that may account for Asian children's willingness to strive for the high expectation and high standards is the importance placed on hard work. Both Chinese and Japanese place great emphasis on the malleability of human beings. It is believed that achievement is possible if one works hard — regardless of the current level of ability. The differences in innate endowment among human beings is not denied, but the significance of innate ability as a controlling factor in achievement is consistently de-emphasized. Innate abilities may determine the rate at which one acquires knowledege, but effort is responsible for the ultimate level of achievement.

The belief in hard work among Asian students persists through high school, despite the fact that some students never achieve the same level of accomplishment as their classmates after years of hard work. When eleventh graders were asked to choose the most important factor that may influence students' performance in mathematics, more Chinese and Japanese than American students thought studying hard was the most important factor (59 percent and 72 percent versus 27 percent, respectively). When teachers of the eleventh graders were asked the same question, 93 percent of the Japanese teachers selected "studying hard" versus 26 percent of the American teachers. In contrast, the first choice of 41 percent of the American teachers, but only 7 percent of the Japanese teachers was innate intelligence.

American culture, to a greater degree than Chinese and Japanese, emphasizes the importance of innate ability. When students were asked how strongly they believed in such statements as, "Everyone in my class has about the same natural ability in math," American students disagreed to a significantly greater degree than did Chinese and Japanese students. Similar results were found when mothers were asked this type of question. Issues of intelligence and individual differences are always a concern of American parents and teachers for their child and student. Intelligence tests are widely used in American educational settings for the purpose of measuring innate ability and for the prediction of future learning outcome. Americans, in contrast to Chinese and Japanese, are much more likely to point to achievement limitations imposed by their assumed level of ability. This greater

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emphasis on innate ability relative to effort would set significant restraint on the motivation and willingness of parents and teachers to work with their children to achieve at a higher level.

In daily classroom experiences, the Asian education philosophy and practice portrays that everyone is equal and should be given equal opportunity to learn. Some children may learn the material more rapidly than others, but that all children are capable of mastering the content of the curriculum. At the elementary school level, the concern is not with identifying individual strengths or needs, but with providing all students with certain necessary knowledge and skills. Even though the class size in Asian schools is much larger, ranging from 38 to 50, the teaching practice is always aimed at the whole class. Teachers devote their energy to construct interesting and effective lessons for the whole class in order to raise the general level of achievement. Tracking or ability grouping within a class is never practiced.

Contrary to the stereotypical image that Americans have about Asian education, learning does not take place through mechanical learning, rote memorization, or because of demanding teachers. Instead, the lessons are lively, interesting and can be summarized as well-planned, coherent learning experiences in which students are led through a series of productive activities (Lee, Graham, & Stevenson, 1992; Stigler & Stevenson, 1991).

Asian classes embody many of the ideals Americans have for their education of the children. In our observation of the 800 mathematic classes, we found that conceptual information and a problem solving approach appeared in over twice as many lessons in Asia than in Chicago. The instructional sequence of teaching, practice, and evaluation occurred in less than 50 percent of the American lessons. In the Asian classes, more than 70 percent of the first grade and more than 80 percent of the fifth-grade classes teachers conducted lessons that involved this sequence.

Asian children were more attentive in the classes than Chicago children — at least 80 percent of the time versus approximately 60 percent. In the Asian classes, the teachers teach each topic slowly and thoroughly. The students showed high interest because teachers integrated a wide variety of activities in their lessons. The students are given the opportunity to use concrete objects, to discuss the concept, to actually solve the problem, and to evaluate the accuracy of the work. Teachers present the mathematical concept in the meaningful context. At the same time, they encourage different ways to solve the problem and they also make good use of students' responses or errors to further clarify the concept. Each child, knowing that he or she will be called upon during the course of the lesson, is attentive to the teacher and to the responses made by other students.

The multiple activity approach also offers different avenues for learning. Some students may learn better by the use of concrete objects; others may be helped by the teacher's or other student's demonstration of solving the problem; still others may be helped by discussion and clarification. Slow learners are aided by these multiple facets in learning the basic material, and fast learners can also benefit from being exposed to every facet of the mathematical concept. All these instructional ideas are not esoteric or unique from Asian philosophy, but they are principles and approaches that would generally be accepted as sensible, productive teaching practices in any classroom. The question is why Asian teachers are more likely to put the beliefs into frequent practice than are American teachers.

Similar to the high level of achievement of the Asian students, the effective instructions given by Asian teachers do not come naturally. Good teachers are not believed to be those who are born with special talent, but those who are given opportunities to work diligently to perfect their instructional skills. In Asian schools new teachers are guided and helped by more experienced teachers. In regular school day, teachers are given time and opportunity to work with each other to produce coherent lessons. Teachers constantly strive to perfect their skills throughout their years of teaching.

Discussing factors that lead to high-achieving Asian students brings a new perspective to many aspects of American education. It is the combination of high expectations, plus a strong belief in effort in the Asian countries that create an environment which facilitates the students' motivation and learning outcomes. The importance of these two factors and the implication for teachers' instruction and students' motivation should not be affected by the different background of the students. They are essential to the improvement of academic success of American children.

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DEVELOPING RESILIENCE IN YOUTH IN URBAN AMERICA

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After the publication of ***A Nation at Risk*** (1983), the term "at risk" was applied with increasing frequency to characterize youth who have a high probability of failing to graduate from high school, and/or who are likely to become a teenage parent, abuse drugs, commit suicide or other negative developmental outcomes. Many of these young people are in major urban cities where poverty and unemployment rates are high, drugs and violent crimes are commonplace, and high stress impacts both home and school environments as well as family functioning. Characteristics such as limited English proficiency, ethnic group status, and other individual level factors interact with school and classroom conditions to affect negatively both the development and educational success of many of these youth.

Although the term "at risk" is relatively new in education as a descriptive and predictive concept applied to youth (Richardson & Colfer, 1990), the concept of risk has a long standing tradition in medical and psychiatric research (Garmezy, 1985; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1979; 1987, 1990) and is used to refer to specific conditions that make individuals susceptible to disease or mental disorders. The educational research on students "at risk" is not quite so clear. The labels "at risk" and "disadvantaged" do not have uniform referents and are used in different ways. (See Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990 for a review and definitions of these terms.) Often definitions of "at risk" use demographic characteristics such as racial and ethnic background and social class as indicators. It is not uncommon for the terms "at risk" and "disadvantaged" to be used to label poor students, especially those from racial and ethnic group backgrounds, or non-English speaking students. Although there is a need for schools and agencies to identify students who may need additional academic or social services in the future, use of the term "at risk" often produces "victim blaming" and suggests that the causes for being "at risk" for failure emerges from the lives, families, communities, or cultures of the student rather than from social, political, and economic conditions.

Gordon's (1982) perspective on students from racial/ethnic groups indicates:

> In earlier work, great attention was given to the characteristics of these populations and the ways in which they differed from the so called majority population. As that work progressed, we have come to realize that it was in error by implying they represented a relatively homogeneous group. They do not. They have poverty and low status and certain kinds of neglect and maltreatment as common characteristics, but in terms of their other characteristics they vary as much within this group as they do between the lower- and higher-status groups... Ethnic and class status is important for political purposes but relatively unimportant for pedagogical purposes" (p. 1975).

Conceptualizations focused on "risk" and deficiencies imply educational practices and policies concerned with remediation in order to make racial/ethnic groups "equal" to their white middle class counterparts. One outcome of this focus has been little systematic, accumulated understanding of the diversity of skills and talents in these groups of students (see Slaughter, 1988 for a more detailed discussion of deficit models and their implications for educational interventions for African American children). More recent perspectives have yielded research that identifies the positive coping and resilience of poor African American children and their families. Some researchers have identified and studied characteristics of higher and lower achieving, low-income African American children and young adults and the family groups and classroom settings in which they participated as members (Clark, 1983; Nelson-LeGali & Glor-Scheib, 1985; Nelson LeGall & Jones, 1990; Scott-Jones, 1987; Winfield, 1988; Winfield, 1991). An emerging knowledge base, of which these studies are a part, show the diversity of competencies and attitudes among low income, African American children, families and communities. Learning and development can best be understood within an ecological perspective (Brofenbrenner, 1979) and over the life-span of an individual. For African American students this means taking into account the triple cultural bind of belonging to the mainstream, the African-rooted culture, and a status-oppressed racial/ethnic group (Boykin, 1986). This perspective also suggest the need for interdisciplinary interventions which go beyond focusing on the individual to focusing on the institutions, such as schools and the community, within which learning and development occur.

One body of research which provides an alternative to current educational conceptualizations of risk can be found in the health and psychiatric research on resilience. This construct delineates individual variation in people's response to risk factors, stress, and adversity (Rutter, 1987). Some individuals are resilient and are able to cope successfully whereas others react negatively. Resilience is conceptualized not as a fixed attribute of the individual, but as vulnerability or protective mechanisms that modify the individual's response to the risk situation, and operate at critical turning points during one's life (Rutter, 1987). A student's decision to remain in school when he or she sees few job opportunities, receives no support or incentives, and experiences negative peer pressure would be an example of an individual's resilience during a critical transition to adulthood. This decision would determine the trajectory of future educational success. Similarly, children starting out in kindergarten bring with them social and behavioral characteristics that may match or be at odds with classroom norms and expectations (Taylor, 1991). These entry characteristics may serve as a risk factor or as a protective mechanism, depending on the reaction those characteristics produce in the social environment. Little is known concerning the sources of resilience or protective mechanisms occurring in these two examples. What protective mechanisms operated during critical points and how did they develop in this individual or in groups of individuals faced with risk conditions in the environment?

In order to move beyond simply identifying and categorizing youth as "at-risk," the focus must necessarily shift to the notion of resilience. Viewed in this manner, the critical issues in education are not "who is at risk" or how many of the factors one has to have to be "at-risk," but what are the protective processes and mechanisms that reduce risk and foster resilience? How do protective processes operate at different developmental levels and/or transition points in the schooling process? Are the variables and functions the same for different race/ethnic/gender groups? And more important, what can schools, administrators, teachers, community groups, and policy makers do to enhance and foster the development of these processes? Rutter (1987) notes:

> Protection does not reside in the psychological chemistry of the moment, but in the ways in which people deal with life changes and in what they do about their stressful or disadvantageous circumstances. Particular attention needs to be paid to the mechanisms operating at key turning points in people's lives when a risk trajectory may be redirected onto a more adaptive path (Rutter, 1987, p. 329).

Rutter (1987) has identified four main processes, which will be used to categorize the knowledge base on schools and communities and the development of resilience among African American youth: (1) the reduction of negative outcomes by altering either the risk or the child's exposure to the risk, (2) reduction of a negative chain reaction following risk exposure, (3) establishment and maintenance of self esteem and self efficacy, and (4) opening up of opportunities. He proposes that the reduction of risk impact occurs in two distinct ways: alteration of the meaning or danger of the risk variable; and changing the child's exposure to the risk situation. For example, providing quality pre-school and early school experience reduces the risk of student attitudes and behaviors which may hinder early learning in a formal school setting. A second group of protective mechanisms are those that reduce the negative chain reactions that follow risk exposure. For example, the negative developmental outcomes of adolescent pregnancy are diminished for teenage mothers if they are provided with prenatal care, home support, adequate child care, and additional education (Scott-Jones, 1991). The third mechanism, self-efficacy, concerns individual concepts and feelings about themselves, their environment, their competence in handling life's obstacles, and perceptions of control in determining outcomes. For individuals in high risk situations, these self concepts develop in interpersonal relationships throughout the life-span and through successful task accomplishment. The fourth mechanism, opening up of opportunities, concerns critical points in individual lives. Here the importance of schooling and attainment of skills and credentials is critical. Those who drop out or who do not apply for training lose the opportunity for experiences that may be protective (Rutter, 1987).

Figure 1 illustrates a framework for examining resilience, schooling, and development. The four protective processes were crossed with critical intervention points for developing resilience among African American youth.

Figure 1

Framework for Organization of Articles on Resilience, Schooling and Development in African American Youth

	SCHOOLS		COMMUNITY	
Protective Mechanisms	School-based Policymakers	Classroom-based	Family	Peers
1. Reduction of risk impact				
2. Reduction of negative chain				
3. Self-esteem, self efficacy				
4. Opening up of opportunities				

Based on a review of empirical studies delineating the construct of resilience (see Winfield, 1991) some suggestions for procedures and practices for practitioners in urban areas are:

In early childhood and elementary education:

- foster social competence and adaptive behavior that protects students from being at risk of placement in special education.
- provide training to teachers to foster positive reactions to entry characteristics of diverse children.
- provide classrooms which foster positive peer relations and encourage instrumental help seeking as a general learning skill.
- alter instructional organization, classroom norms and procedures to encourage appropriate help-seeking behavior.

In middle school and adolescence:

- provide classroom and school programs which facilitate positive peer interactions in multiracial settings.
- provide programs that include social support systems which foster pro-academic behaviors and provide mentoring for students from ethnic minority cultures.
- provide extra-curricular activities that make students feel connected to the school environment.
- encourage intramural and interscholastic sports at middle school as a way of fostering academic resilience.
- begin career exploration and guidance counseling at the middle school level; focus on course selection, and preparation for post-secondary enrollment.

- coordinate social service with community-based clinics to reduce risk taking behavior of adolescents.
- collaborate with community-based agencies to provide outlets for students to invest and discover their interests and talents.

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LINKING URBAN STUDENTS TO THE 21ST CENTURY

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I would like to begin by commenting on the four themes of the Urban Learner Framework (ULF). To repeat them, they are (1) cultural diversity and learning, (2) unrecognized talents and hidden abilities, (3) motivation and effort, and (4) resiliency.

On the one hand, I think these are excellent themes that should be celebrated and sustained. And I believe they are true, in the sense that they do reflect reality. And there is convincing evidence that these themes are based on sound educational research. At the same time, I hope these themes are not seen as making urban students somehow separate and "different" from other people. That could have some negative and most undesirable consequences. However, I am especially pleased with the four themes of the Framework because they correspond to work I have been engaged with for some time.

What I would like to share with you is some research completed at our laboratory (NCREL) that we conducted in conjunction with developing the teleseries, "Restructuring America's Schools to Promote Learning." In that series, we developed a framework for school restructuring, a national concern, and a basis for school change in every community. The first element in our framework is the vision of learning. Clearly, the four themes that RBS has developed are your understanding of the vision of learning for the **urban learner**. I would like to show you how close those themes are to what we determined were the characteristics of successful students in general, not just urban students. Our framework included: (1) knowledgeability, (2) self-determination, (3) strategic thinking, and (4) empathetic thought or reflection (capabilities to take the multiple perspectives and roles of other people).

- Consider: **Hidden talents and abilities (Theme 2).** This theme is close to knowledgeability or having knowledge of the subject area of the curriculum and a passion for it. It is a conception close to the hidden talents listed by Dr. Bernal which represent a student's personalized understanding of knowledge.

- Consider: **Resiliency (Theme 4).** Think how close this theme is to self determination in terms of the capability to keep going and to persist at something in the face of major obstacles and many challenges.

- Consider: **Motivation and effort (Theme 3).** Think how close this theme is to being strategic, to be planful and well intentioned. Much of the conceptual work we have done at NCREL is based on learner-oriented research that Barbara McCombs and Robert Marzano from McREL have completed on motivation and effort. **Strategic** is different from self-determination because, in our definition at NCREL, it means the ability to apply a repertoire of organizational and thinking/learning strategies to your goals, whether these be life goals, academic goals, or personal development goals. Strategic thinking doesn't mean just strategic planning; it means the ability to identify an appropriate match between goal and strategy. It means to monitor and change, when the strategy or goal is not working, and to follow through on an evaluation and revision. Our definition of strategic is rich and complex.

- And finally, consider **cultural diversity (Theme 1).** In order to respect and value diversity, our conception calls for appreciating multiple perspectives, especially being empathetic. We define empathetic as the ability of the student to see other people's viewpoints, to value and respect diverse cultures, and to value and be able to think within multiple perspectives. So I believe there is a genuine fit here between what we found in our analysis of the research literature from cognitive instruction and what RBS has done.

All this is very interesting, but the big question is how do we get structured, urban environments to promote successful learning? Toward that end, I'd like to take a moment to have **you** think, to play a game that I'm sure all of you know. The game is called "Who am I?" I'm going to review a list of characteristics that are probably very familiar to most of you. Don't say who you think "I am" until I've finished describing all the characteristics.

- "Who am I?" As a school system, I am centralized in terms of administration and finance. I have a standardized curriculum that has standardized objectives, materials, and standardized tests. In terms of classroom instruction, the teacher is the information giver; the student the passive recipient. Students sit in rows. They face the teacher, they stand when they are called upon, and there is a lot of work from memory.

- My student body is characterized by much cultural and ethnic diversity, there is also extensive poverty. Most of the students are from homes in projects, many from broken homes. Some students are homeless, and many have health problems.

- In terms of the school buildings, in my system all of them are old. They lack resources and supplies. There is a terrible teacher/pupil ratio, a high mobility rate, and classrooms are very over-crowded.

- In terms of government, my school system is highly autocratic. Teachers are drawn mostly from the dominant culture.

- Who am I?

I am a traditional school system inherited from Communism that still functions today in Russia! Schools there have all these characteristics. Now why do I raise this? Because in spite of Russia's economic instability, one of the things that their education has clearly had, and one of its few major successes by any standards is its educational system. Russia has a highly literate population in terms of mathematics, literature, communications, and the arts. Itsak Wirszup, of the University of Chicago, has for years testified to the U.S. Senate in terms of how early in a student's studies Russia teaches geometry — generally in the second grade. The same is true of algebra and physics — much earlier than for our students. And so many Russian students excel in these subjects.

First, I think it has to do with the Russians' conception of intelligence. They do not believe that intelligence is fixed. They think it is not on a normal curve, and they truly believe that all children can learn. They hold very high expectations from all levels of the government system that Russian students can and will learn. I'm not speaking of the negative aspects of the notion of conformity that we associate with non-democracies. Rather, that the Russians do have very high expectations of their students that are widely shared. Furthermore, there is a tremendous amount of community support in Russia for learning. In this poverty-stricken society, even the poorest parents pay teachers if their children fail, so there is little grade retention. That is, the parent can choose to have the child tutored, and the parents pay for it.

Second, Russian education has a rigorous curriculum. Russian students are generally a very "cultured" people. They care intensely about their national culture, they know about ballet, Russian authors, opera, the symphony, and so forth, and they are deeply interested in these things. In spite of their poverty, they go in droves to cultural events. They are also highly skilled in certain industries, although many of these industries are so outmoded, they would not be considered highly skilled by our standards. So what is the difference between Russia's education and our own, in terms of being able to reach advanced student outcomes? I think it comes down to some of the things that we have talked about at this meeting, and some of the things that we have not yet discussed.

Third, attention must be paid to attitudes about instruction that are characteristic of many Russian teachers. Under conditions far more demanding than many American school faculties face, Russian education brings a high level of thinking into most elementary and secondary classrooms. How many instructors use second languages and advanced literatures? Many Russian students learn to love their subjects of study and master skills of advanced performers.

So, what are some of the implications of the themes from the ULF and this brief commentary on Russian education? Why is it that we share some of the worst school characteristics with Russia — a bloated bureaucracy, outmoded pedagogy, and mass poverty — but they still have high academic achievement as a norm, while we suffer from low academic performance for a good part of our populace? Let's re-examine those three significant factors: notions of intelligence, curriculum, and instruction.

Beliefs about Intelligence

What is it about ***our*** notions of intelligence that are so problematic? First, we know that many educators do not believe that all students can learn. Nor is there a widespread belief that intelligence can be modified by the environment, by schooling, or by teaching. Third — and perhaps this is the most crippling — there is no way that we see high achievement on the part of all children if we fail half of them every time we give a standardized test. In Asia, and in some other countries as well as Russia, the normal curve does not dominate assessment. Rather, criterion referenced tests are used for assessment; the result is a J-shaped curve, which shows all students learn and most scores go up and continue to do so.

Moreover, teachers in these countries believe they can make a difference. They are supported so that their classroom lessons are powerful and influential. Moreover, teachers in China, Russia, and Japan do not necessarily teach every day; they are paid by each course they teach, and they have extensive preparatory time. We must stop blaming poverty and even the traditional, bureaucratic system as excuses for lack of academic action. Let us see how education in others countries supports learning so that the majority of students attain mastery, in spite of poverty and bureaucracy.

Curriculum for the 21st Century

In terms of recognizing the significance of RBS's ULF, it is very important that the school's curriculum should emphasize and build on the strengths of culturally diverse students. It ought to celebrate their hidden talents and seek out features of resiliency that are idiosyncratic to specific individuals or groups. There also needs to be a balance built between individualization of the curriculum and classroom and training for all students for the 21st century.

It is my position that there is a **core curriculum** that every student needs to master. In terms of knowledge, skills, and key dispositions, Jeff Howard of the Efficacy Institute argues that every learner today has to know three things. One of them is **calculus**, and obviously **algebra** and other courses that are preparatory to calculus. Moreover, each learner has to speak at least **two languages** fluently, if you are really going to be among the most successful. A lot of us have advanced without doing that, but Howard is talking about the top echelons of society. Thirdly, he identifies **fluency in oral and written native language as a key aspect of curricular success**.

Another source of standards for the 21st century is the SCANS report, the Department of Labor's special examinations of achievement for the future labor force. This report emphasizes knowledge of **systems**; the ability to engage in **problem solving**; the capability to work **independently as well as collaboratively**; and the ability **to locate, to use, and process information**. For example, the Co-NECT Project, developed by Allan Collins and others, has incorporated these objectives into its award-winning NASDC proposal which has now been implemented.

To these criteria for a core curriculum, I would add other skills and dispositions. Consider **the ability to shape and manage change**. I think that Bernal's example here (this volume) is an interesting notion to consider for adults. We do not learn to shape and manage change in our schools. Both at the adult and student level, we need to be able to do that because in this dynamic world the process of change is so demanding. We are either going to have it pass us by, or we are going to have to come to terms with how to shape and manage it. Students in school must have opportunities for similar learning.

Second, I would add civic and social responsibility to a core curriculum for the 21st century. I do not believe many of our schools now focus on this. We need this emphasis now more than ever in order to grapple with issues of democracy in a complex, multicultural, and fast-changing world.

Third, I think there is an issue of **entrepreneurship**. Today, there is much evidence of entrepreneurship in our society. We have hardly begun to capitalize on it or teach it in the classroom. We must address this concern; we have to help people learn to renew their own occupations. If a person's job is going to change seven to ten times in his/her lifetime, students must acquire some skills that will sustain them through these changes and give them direction and value for society. I think we need to consider seriously the teaching of conscious, intentional entrepreneurship.

Fourth, there is the whole notion of **value for diversity and multiple perspectives**, an area that was recently addressed in a paper on empathy, recently produced by the Northwest Laboratory. It is an excellent paper. I want you to consider empathy as being sympathetic with others in an emotional way. This is a very important trait today. It is important to identity in an affective way with other cultures and other peoples. There is a cognitive aspect here, as well. Respecting multiple perspectives means a person is able to argue from their perspective, to reason from their point of view, without necessarily accepting it as one's own. It is a first step to shared understanding.

The next characteristic I think is important is **self-determination balanced by interdependence**. We need to teach this to students, especially if they do not learn it from their homes or community. We need to teach students about perseverance and effort in both strategic thinking and advocacy. But, that must be balanced by a spirit of interdependence. Think of the power we would have if we taught students to solve problems in heterogeneous groups. Students could learn how they can be mutually supportive, working inside the community, with the community, bringing the community inside the schools. John Dewey is not so old fashioned.

Another characteristic I would include in a core curriculum for the 21st century is **knowledge of environmental issues**. In my opinion, our environment is in great jeopardy. It is imperative that all of us, both adults and new generations, understand the factors that are hurting and helping our environment. Schooling must deal, as well, with the ability to shape and manage those factors.

Finally, in terms of a core curriculum, I think students need to have an understanding of the **global marketplace**. If we do not begin to understand the rhetoric in this country about the global marketplace, and if we do not begin to prepare urban students to participate in it, they will be destined to an inert parochialism in the future. There is no reason why such learning should not begin in high school. For sure, this is not something you wait to address in college.

Instruction

To summarize much of the thought demonstrated at this conference in the area of instruction, we are obviously talking about a major paradigm shift that redefines teacher and student roles in education. We are talking about a teacher who can be a collaborator, can inspire true dialogue in the classroom — so that discussion does not only flow from teacher to student — but from student to student. That is, the new model of teaching gives students permission to talk among themselves. This model strives for student self-regulation, where the learners choose many tasks, make decisions, and evaluate themselves. How can we expect students to go from high school to the independence of college or work life without exhibiting these characteristics? In our urban schools in particular, we hardly give opportunities for any self-managed work in the classroom.

And above all, if there was one single thing that I had to say that is ***the*** most important single thing that teachers will do in the classroom, it would be to build **the capability to help students link new information to their personal strengths, to their prior knowledge, and to their cultural experience**. Students need to identify their own strengths and individual meanings. This is not just a matter of moving from concrete to abstract in a linear progression. This advancement means beginning with the student and, at each new part of instruction, the teacher goes back to support what the student already knows: Are you still on track? Are you still comprehending the direction it's going? Learning is very iterative, a cyclical kind of process, a mediation, as Feuerstein proposes. It is a matter of construction, not mere "coverage."

Besides this whole notion of building meaning, a second characteristic related to instruction, which I think is almost as powerful, is the notion of **authentic task**. In order to provide more meaningful instruction, we need to align tasks in school to tasks in the real world — in terms of accomplishing life goals and community goals — and in terms of being prepared for the 21st century. I was once very arrogant about research. I used to think that if you had not read and applied cognitive research on teaching, then you weren't going to make a difference in the classroom. When I went all around the country to identify some of the better examples of classroom instruction for the television programs we were producing with PBS, I learned an important lesson. What came up time and again was the notion of authentic tasks.

I found schools and teachers that did not know a thing about the research on strategic teaching or metacognition, but were able to take this concept of authentic task and think: How is my school or classroom not aligned to the real world and the future? What do they do in an office that I need to teach in my classroom? What do they do in the community? For instance, we taped an urban primary teacher with a rural high school teacher. The primary teacher was steeped in research on strategic teaching and authentic tasks. The rural teacher knew little of this research. He just sat back and thought: How can I make my class more like the outside world? In spite of these differences in background knowledge, both of them had developed classroom ***"experts"*** in instruction. Both had integrated reading and writing; both understood that in an office things were integrated; both used collaborative learning and support groups in their classroom; and, finally, both tried to make the classroom as real as they could in terms of what existed outside. There are many roads to successful instruction. Implementation is multi-faceted.

There is also the issue of making schools **learning communities,** in terms of having schools become the hub of community networks. In my opinion, schools should have semi-permeable boundaries so that students can work and participate in the social life of the community while they work at school. This means that the community also needs to be able to come into the school in the form of role models, teachers, and learners. And students can even help teach some of the people in the community, such as providing accounting skills and desktop publishing knowledge for needy community groups.

Thus, there are many ways that students can engage in authentic tasks that would renew them and renew the community at the same time. When you do that, you begin to redefine who is a student, who is a teacher, what is a textbook, what is a task, and where is the classroom. You identify learning with all of the above.

In this country, we have chosen to define these things in very strict, narrow ways. I think that the paradigm shift that we are now engaged in is requiring redefinition, not mere rethinking of the teacher/student relationship in and beyond the classroom. We are on the brink of new identities for the actors, and even creating unheard of possibilities for educational location. This is true not only for schools, but for teacher education, too. For example, the Michigan Partnership has developed a new entity, the Professional Development School, which is drawn partly from the University and partly from the school, has become another organization that is redefining student and teacher roles. Novice teachers may learn in the classroom, outside school in the community, or at the university. The role of teacher is now shared by the faculty in the school and by the faculty in the university. Theory meets practice and research continuously develops in this new entity

Assessment

Finally, there are implications for assessment. We know we must now think about the hidden talents of urban students, but even more important, we see the need to develop tasks for all students that assess their learning potential, as defined by Reuven Feuerstein and others. I would also like to see us develop a battery of learning strategy tests for students as well. Moreover, I believe we need to expand the learning potential idea, because it has mainly been cognitive in emphasis. And it should not be for a special select group, such as urban students, but rather expanded for all learners. I would like to see more than just performance-based assessment, because you can have performance-based assessment of reading that serves only to find the main idea or to defend particular choices. That is not what performance-based assessment is all about. Performance has to do with becoming expert, knowing a subject well; we need to develop a full technology for such assessment. When Grant Wiggins and Howard Gardner talk about performance-based assessment, they are not trying to get students to be better at the kinds of tasks we now have in schools emphasizing basals and lower level thinking. They are talking about performances for authentic tasks that assess multiple intelligences and varied, sophisticated thinking strategies.

One of the most exciting things about current assessment is that the new conception integrates curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The new assessment is not an add-on concept; rather, it is embedded in the process of performing the task. Such assessment ***is*** really part of instruction. The drafts, plans, group process, and other artifacts of performance are incorporated along with the final outcome. In other words, in this new understanding, the ***process*** of getting to the outcome is as important in understanding, learning, shaping, and managing as the outcome in this new understanding of performance-based assessment. One way to organize this integration is through the notion of curriculum by project. In this concept, students work in small groups or as individuals to develop a project around a theme that is often interdisciplinary. The project may be for research

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or involve other productive intelligences such as dance, art, or interpersonal communication. Students plan the project with the teacher with full knowledge of which artifacts will be used as part of the assessment, what the standards are for successful completion, and their own goals of involvement. Indeed, in the curriculum-by-project concept students often have an option for self-assessment as well as group production in learning.

I would like to close with one final thought. I've written an article about Chapter 1 which I originally titled, "Students at Risk Versus the Board of Education," (Jones & Pierce, 1992) because I believe that access to educational opportunities are not a whole lot different now than what they were in 1954. Chapter 1 legislation may have been well-intended, but I suggest in this paper how Chapter 1 rules — such as those for pull-out courses and those for supplementing the regular curriculum — have actually caused segregation and inequity in the very things the law was designed to address. However, now Chapter 1 has a window of opportunity to become leadership legislation, if it chooses to do so. It is the biggest single funding that we have in this country, and it has phenomenal power derived from that. There is tremendous opportunity now to change this legislation. We need to direct the conversation about Chapter 1 to the very issues of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the 21st century that we have been discussing today. The new vision — both the ULF and restructured schools — must become new realities for all the children in America's schools.

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REDESIGNING THE "VISION" THROUGH STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Yvette F. Jackson

As we forge ahead into the 21st century and analyze the implications that our current activities, values, and opportunities have for our future as a productive society, it is painfully clear that our success depends upon the foundation of knowledge and skills which we impart to the leaders of the next century: our youth. We no longer have the luxury to settle for average academic achievement for American youth. Fifty percent achieve above already-too-low minimum standards and those who do not meet these standards are lost in an invisible entity (the majority of this population comes from urban locations). The stakes are too high! We must seize the moment. We must pledge every effort to nurture the fullest potential of our children. We must increase our expectations for their success and provide educational opportunities which strengthen their knowledge and skills so they ***can*** achieve. If we don't succeed in this effort, our future as a productive society is indeed "at risk."

In other words, we must pursue the concept presented by the Urban Education staff of Research for Better Schools (RBS) and design a new vision for the urban learner. It is a vision that sees all students as "capable, motivated, resilient learners able to build on cultural strengths to achieve educational success" (RBS, 1992).

This concept of a new vision has been the motivating force behind the current educational thrusts: "restructuring," "revitalizing," "transforming," and "site-based management." The mission of these thrusts is the creation of environments in which teachers are supported to identify and nurture the potential of all children. The challenge lies in determining how to build and sustain these supporting environments.

Beau Fly Jones (this volume) has described three major strategies for building such school environments. She emphasized collaboration between teachers and students; identification of authentic tasks for students which deal with real life and learning; and improved methods of assessment which elicit hidden talents and reflect the curriculum and instruction experienced by students.

The initial implication of all these strategies is that the focus of learning is on the learner (Jones, 1992). In schools restructured to pursue the new vision of urban students, learning is first and foremost collaborative. In other words, schools must strive to become a "community of learners."

Thus, we realize the basic purpose or goal of staff/professional development is to support and enhance the learning process for both students and staff. With this goal, we can define a basic distinction between staff and professional development; a distinction which can assist in planning specific activities to address the entire community of learners.

Staff development needs to focus on the educator as a guide or mediator for students with the objective being the improvement of instruction so that students can realize their potential and actually experience academic achievement. (A synonym for staff development to apply here would be "instructional" development.)

Professional development needs to focus on the educator as the learner with the objective being the enhancement of the personal repertoire of the educator, so that he/she can more effectively communicate and reach personal goals. (A synonym for professional development to apply here would be "personal" development.)

In both roles (guide or learner), achieving the specific objective (instructional or personal development) is contingent upon clear identification and articulation of the applicable knowledge, skills, and strategies. The applicable knowledge, strategies, or skills are most successfully integrated into an instructional program when they have been identified and explored by the staff themselves. This identification and exploration are achievable when procedures described by Tharp (1992) as "principles that can unite the community of teachers and guide the direction of their learning" are established as routine activities for this community. These procedures are: instructional conversation; development of specific language for planning instruction; clarification of the context of the specific instruction to be planned; and opportunities for joint productive activity.

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Staff Development for Enhancing Instruction

As a guide/mediator in the community of learners, the educator purposefully constructs experiences and demonstrates strategies to nurture the potential of students (Feuerstein, 1982). Assuming this role is obviously dependent on the opportunities available for supportive staff development.

Supportive staff development provides educators with the knowledge, skills, and strategies which enable them to guide students to and through the learning process. This redefinition of educator as "guide" implies that the repertoire necessary to stretch the learning potential of students goes beyond academics and the basic skills which have traditionally been the core component of staff development. Such a program must include a second component which provides teachers with concepts that define how students learn at different stages of development along with the strategies needed to elicit and nurture their learning.

The concepts which define how students learn are best interpreted when posed to teachers as questions for inquiry and exploration from various perspectives. These include:

- What is intelligence?
- What is learning?
- How do students learn?
- How do you identify a student's learning?
- What instructional strategies support learning?
- How do you identify a student's potential?
- How do you nurture a student's potential?
- What skills are necessary to achieve academic success?
- What skills are necessary for successful living?

The answers to these questions become "guiding" concepts which provide the rationale for why certain strategies or approaches should be integrated into the instructional program. They are also a conceptual base of a new vision for student achievement.

These strategies or approaches respond directly to the guiding concepts and provide foundational blocks for teachers to mediate student learning. They can optimally assist in enhancing the instructional repertoire of teachers, when presented through staff development. These strategies are referred to by Jones (1992) as cognitive designs of specific "strategies instruction," as well as the "situated strategies" which are bridged to curriculum so that specific applications can be demonstrated.

These strategies or approaches for staff development which guide/mediate learning are described as follows:

- ***Developmentally Holistic Instruction*** — The development of children occurs in stages through several dimensions: cognitive/linguistic, social, emotional, and physical. All these dimensions, at every developmental stage have a direct relationship to learning. At each stage, specific skills and abilities evolve and lay the foundation for the next stage (Erickson, 1950; Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1972). Developmentally holistic instruction includes activities and opportunities which integrate all dimensions of development with tasks that are appropriate for the specific developmental stage to ensure maximum capability and learning acquisition on the part of the child.

- ***Brain-Based Learning Approaches*** — Optimum learning can be realized when instruction is compatible with how the brain operates in the learning process. The brain searches for connections or relationships for understanding in order to link what is being learned to the rest of the learner's current experiences and prior knowledge. Brain-based approaches include:

- identifying the experiences and abilities of students
- bridging new concepts to familiar experiences
- illustrating common information between concepts
- showing the relationship between issues/subjects
- designing activities which produce interconnections and enable students to perceive "the patterns that connect" (Caine & Caine, 1989).

Specific examples of brain-based learning approaches include problem solving; questioning; patterning by drawing relationships through the use of metaphor, similes, and demonstrations; and thematic teaching.

- ***Multicultural Education*** — Intelligence is defined by Bruner (1971) as "knowing what to do when one does not know the answer to something." This type of intellectual behavior combined with one's application of his or her current knowledge, skills, and abilities in a situation are the foundation of personal achievement. Multicultural education is the approach which provides students with the opportunities to nurture these types of intellectual behaviors. Its focus includes strategies which enable students to:
  - identify, appreciate, and apply their own abilities, skills, and cultural experiences
  - identify and appreciate the abilities, skills, and cultural experiences of others
  - utilize the abilities and skills of others as resources to resolve a problem, address a need, or create a product (i.e., recognize the interdependence of people).
- ***Interdisciplinary Education*** — As previously stated, learning happens when students ***see*** relationships/ connections in information or concepts. The various disciplines involved in academic instruction each has its own education, training, procedures, methods, and content areas (Piaget, 1972). However, to enhance learning we need to provide learning experiences that periodically demonstrate the relationship of the disciplines through active linkages between the subjects (Jacobs, 1989). Interdisciplinary education provides experiences for students to pursue activities which cross several disciplines so they can make linkages, or see connections in various information bases.
- ***Enrichment*** — the experiences needed to nurture intelligence span far beyond basic skills. The types of experiences needed are those which motivate students to demonstrate their potential and stretch their cognitive abilities. The Enrichment Triad Model designed by Renzulli offers a concise framework for identifying and coordinating such experiences. These include:

  Type I ***Exposure*** to a variety of cultural, technological, and subject-oriented activities in order to identify and motivate the interests of students.

  Type II ***Group Training Processes*** — teach thinking skills and strategies that promote learning (i.e., cognitive, affective, learning how to learn, and advanced research skills).

  Type III ***Investigations of Real Life Problems*** — introduce relevant opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and strategies in real-life, authentic situations.

Professional Development to Enhance the Learning Community

The two components of staff development (academic content and learning strategies) form the foundation of support that enables teachers to guide students to realize their own potential. In restructured schools, these components are combined with the goal of personal development of the teacher as an educational leader. This can be accomplished when teachers have opportunities to develop skills that nurture individual growth and enable them to become active participants in providing the direction and management of the school.

The personal development skills that need to be included in a professional development agenda can be organized into two categories:

- ***personal leadership skills*** — facilitation, presenting, coaching, consulting, and time management (Garmston & Wellman, 1992)
- ***collaboration skills*** — communication, problem solving, decisionmaking, planning, and team building.

Comprehensive professional development should include opportunities for teachers to apply these skills through participation in collaborative functions. These opportunities might include:

- occasions for focused communication and exchange
- input in determining specific needs to be addressed
- time for cooperative planning
- opportunities for managing.

Staff and professional development can be most effective when a framework is used which incorporates the elements of effective training into the design. This framework seeks to facilitate comprehensive planning and implementation for addressing knowledge, skills, strategies, and attitudes which meet instructional and personal development objectives. The elements to include in this framework include:

- knowledge
- modeling (using a variety of devices)
- practice (concrete experiences/time for application)
- observation
- coaching
- communication/feedback
- redesign (based on evaluation).

The ultimate determiner of the success of either staff or professional development is its impact on the learners: teachers and students. The new vision of the urban learner, promoted by RBS, calls for increased expectations for students, which automatically means increased expectations for teachers. Providing opportunities for both staff and professional development requires an investment of time and energy, as well as financial resources. The pay-off on such an investment can be great. Our children deserve such a pay-off. The future of our society, embedded in a productive work force for the 21st century, is built upon such an investment.

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THE RESEARCHING AND INQUIRING MANAGER: RESPONDING TO THE URBAN LEARNER; WORKING TOWARD CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE EDUCATION

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This paper chronicles a three-year effort to lead a group of urban principals and a group of middle management support staff toward the design of culturally appropriate and demonstrably effective educational organizations. The paper restricts its scope to a set of research, training, group building, and planning activities undertaken by a regional (district) office within a large urban school district.

Perspectives/Theoretical Framework

Schon (1983) has helped position practitioner research as both a legitimate form of inquiry and a key element of reflective and effective practice. As organizational theorists consider the elements of the "modern" organization, they talk about the organization's capacity to learn, and define effective leadership as the ability to build learning organizations through such skills as bringing to the surface prevailing assumptions (Morgan, 1985; DeGeus, 1988; Senge, 1990). Another dimension is closeness to the customer (Peters & Waterman, 1982) or customer-driven organization (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Although the literature on practitioner research by administrators is limited (e.g., Wagner, 1991), there is an emergent and compelling literature on teacher research as a means to promote inquiry and action (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992).

The Setting

In August 1990, I was appointed superintendent of a sub-district in a large eastern city with responsibility for 30 elementary, middle, and special schools enrolling about 20,000 students. I was the fourth superintendent in five years. In the summer of 1991 a system-wide reorganization increased the size to 36 schools and 25,000 students.

The region is diverse: half the schools have 75 percent or more of their students from low-income families, almost all of them African American; a quarter of the schools are desegregated and have middle and upper middle income families; more than 90 percent of the students in the region are African American and more than 3,000 are special needs students. Of the 36 elementary and middle school principals, 12 are African American and 17 women; all but two are experienced administrators. The regional office has 55 professional staff members who provide support services to schools.

Since becoming regional superintendent, I have purposefully pursued a strategy of action research and practitioner inquiry to encourage principals, teachers, and support staff to become a community in which we think, learn, and work together on ways of better educating the urban learner. What follows is a description of a number of the activities we have undertaken in pursuit of that goal.

Focusing on Retention

Analysis of student performance for 1989-90 indicated that over 20 percent of students in grades 1–8 were being retained in grades annually, and that retention rates in individual schools with similar demographics varied widely. Recognizing that retention has little benefit to students (see for example, Shepard & Smith, 1990), I determined that an immediate priority needed to be a field research project focusing on the problem. Further, the project had to communicate to principals, teachers, and parents that the high retention rate was a shared problem.

Methods/Techniques

The first phase of the project involved visiting two schools each morning, four days a week during September and October, in order to develop "first impressions." By the end of October, I calculated that I had visited at least 800 classrooms. I shared my impressions with principals and district support staff in early November. From November through February, I conducted a second round of visits, focusing on classrooms/subjects where failure rates seemed inordinately high. As operationalized, this meant selecting the grade at each school with the highest proportion of report card D's and F's in basic subjects at the end of the previous school year, then following one class group from that grade selected by the principal on the morning of the visit. My practice was to follow the class wherever they went until 1:00 p.m.

Generally I observed basic subject classes — reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, and perhaps one "co-curricular" class like art or music. During classes I took extensive field notes. My focus was on students and how they were experiencing each class and school generally. The observations were "cross-sectional" in the sense that I was able to observe each group of students from the very beginning of their day at school, permitting me to be aware of relational issues in the group as these issues played out through the day, and to see how the students behaved and performed in different classrooms and subjects, and with different teachers. In "self-contained" classrooms, usually in lower grades, I generally observed the same teacher for two to three hours. In "cycled" classes in the upper grades I observed four to six teachers in succession.

I knew from the outset that in conducting this study I was violating a set of implicit norms about what superintendents are supposed to do. I was spending lots of time in classrooms rather than on "administration." I was not evaluating either principals or teachers in the process. And I was bypassing principals by interpreting what was going on in classrooms within their schools without asking their opinions. But this "violation of expectations" was intentional; I wanted principals (and teachers) to know that teaching and learning were my first priorities and needed to be theirs; and I wanted principals to wonder about what I might be learning through these visits.

As this observation cycle evolved, it became increasingly clear that the utility of this project would ultimately depend on the degree to which I was able to identify issues and questions that would frame and initiate discussions among principals and teachers on improving teaching and learning. Some of these issues related to recent school district policy, others to research on teaching (e.g., Rowan, 1990). I also became conscious of the asymmetry of the process. As the district superintendent, I could enter teachers' classrooms without notice or consent, something no one other than the principal has the authority to do. Although I assured teachers whom I observed that I was not there to evaluate them, but rather to learn about being a student at that grade level, they still seemed to expect that I would (or should) provide them immediate reactions to what I had seen in classrooms. I routinely avoided providing any feedback, and instead indicated that I would send them a report on the project after I had completed the round of observations.

To reduce the asymmetry, I decided to conduct a series of discussions with the teachers whose classrooms I'd been in. Each teacher whom I had observed (N=90) was invited to the district office on an afternoon after school to learn about the study and share issues/perceptions about teaching. Meetings were organized in grade level groups of 16-18; of those invited, two-thirds attended. At the outset of each meeting I spoke briefly about my purposes for conducting the study, then invited dialogue on organizational issues and constraints which they felt were preventing them from doing their jobs well. A member of the district office support staff was present to act as observer/recorder.

Principals were also concerned about my impressions of their schools and the classrooms in which I had visited. Again, I gave very little immediate feedback and restricted my comments to generalizations at district staff meetings where I discussed major themes or issues the observations were raising for me. I did, however, distribute the summaries of the sessions with teachers at a principals' meeting in mid-April. The ensuing discussion lead to a shared recognition that if we were going to provide more effective schooling, we were going to have to talk more about today's children and how we could design organizations, pedagogy, programs, and curricula that were responsive to them, while not sacrificing standards or basic education.

Data Sources

For each of the 30 "shadow" visits I kept extended, ongoing observation/field notes on everything from classroom furniture arrangements to student responses to instruction and recess activities. Within a day or two of each school visit I summarized the observations into a few pages of major themes/issues/activities/pedagogical techniques/student responses. When the observations were completed, I reread both the notes and the summaries to determine the "findings"— to see what conclusions I could draw regarding teaching and learning in the district, and the experience of being a student in grades 1–8 (a process characterized as "conversing with the data" by Erickson, 1986). What emerged was a set of impressions, organized in categories and topics; in various forms this was the data shared with the groups with whom I met, although this data was not shared with the teachers I had observed. In addition, the comments of participants at each of the meetings were considered as data and analysis.

Learning About Our Clients: Who Are These Kids?

This notion of observing students as a way of deepening understanding of why they behave and perform as they do was used to frame a principal research project organized early in the 1991–92 school year. The 36 principals, as well as 9 administrators, were asked to identify a single student to study intensively over a four month period. The purpose was to address three major issues principals had identified as topics to work on during the year — alternative assessment, group leadership which supports shared decisionmaking, and the urban child of the 90's — by learning about school from a student's perspective. A brief outline of the study plan follows:

The administrators were organized in nine heterogeneously grouped study teams of five colleagues. Each team met during biweekly staff meetings to plan each stage of the project, share experiences about research already conducted, and prepare reports for the whole group.

In selecting students to study, teams were expected to insure variation in grade, performance history, and special program placement, and to consider how they would inform the child's parents and teachers of the project.

The activities had been predetermined to insure that the administrators would have personal knowledge of the students before they undertook the "institutional" components of the study. Each activity was introduced at a staff meeting along with appropriate readings, planning and training; the "researchers" had two weeks to complete that phase, then discuss the results with their teams at the next meeting. The sequence was as follows:

1. ***Shadow the student*** for a whole day (or two half-days) keeping detailed notes about what the student does. Write a summary of the observation including key anecdotes.

2. ***Interview the student*** (tape record?) Transcribe the student's responses.

3. ***Interview the student's parent(s) or guardian*** (telephone/home visit). Transcribe key responses.

4. ***Review*** the ***student's official records*** and all his/her available ***work samples*** for this year. What does the "paper record" tell about the student? (You may wish to advise the student's teachers to begin collecting work samples early on.)

5. ***Interview*** all ***the student's teachers*** about their perceptions of this child.

6. During the study, ***keep a journal*** in which you record your reactions to the process (including staff meetings), any incidental information you acquire about your student (e.g., saw her doing ropes in yard with three older girls), comments about your group's functioning and the whole group's functioning, and anything else which seems pertinent.

7. Write a ***study team report*** which summarizes your collective observations, the implications of your study, and the questions which the project has generated for you. This report will be shared with the whole group (producing a total of nine reports profiling 45 students).

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At the conclusion of the study, the region conducted a mini-research conference at which the nine groups presented their findings and discussed the experience of doing the project.

Focus Group Studies of Report Card Marks

In reviewing 1991-92 report card marks the regional office noted that with the exception of middle schools where marks were consistently poor, other schools appeared to vary widely in terms of the proportion of A's and B's and D's and F's in major subjects, independent of socio economic characteristics or grade structure (K-5 or K-8). To better understand the variation, the regional office convened four "focus groups" of principals in mid-September and early October 1992, to discuss 1991-92 final report card marks.

Because focus groups work best when the participants are relatively homogeneous, the groups were stratified by level and proportion of A's and B's or D's and F's. Two groups had disproportionately high A's and B's (N = 5 & 7) and two disproportionately high D's and F's (N = 6 & 7). The discussions were designed to be non-evaluative. A facilitator and recorder were present for each meeting. Principals were provided report card data summary sheets which included their schools, the other schools in the group, and city-wide averages. The facilitator began the discussion by asking the group to interpret the data. When the discussion concluded (50-90 minutes), the recorder shared observations with the participants, then a whole group discussion followed. In two cases the focus groups were held during a regional staff meeting using a "fishbowl" design. Written summaries of the meetings were shared with all participants; no editorial or evaluative comments were added. However, the minutes were reorganized into categories derived from the transcripts. Principals commented that a similar process could be used with their faculties, for example as a way to discuss grade-by-grade performance.

Principals Study Principals (November, 1992)

In order to initiate inquiry into the changing role of the principal as schools move to shared governance and site based management, the 16 principals in the region have been paired and will each spend a day doing an ethnography of the other. The descriptive process is one most of the group members have used previously in doing student ethnographies. They also have been provided excerpts from ***Principals in Action: The Reality of Managing Schools,*** an ethnographic study of Chicago principals done by Van Cleve Morris and his associates (1984). When the field study part of the project is complete, participants will be organized in data analysis teams to share their findings and develop descriptions of their work. We anticipate focusing increasingly on the changing nature of principals' work and on the skills the new role will require.

Race and Education in Urban America

During summer 1992, Dr. Anita Williams, a Regional Assistant, and I organized a seminar for teachers, principals and parents to explore the ways in which race affects the work of the organization and the life experience of its students. Because the discussion of race is normally taboo, this was also an experiment to see whether a group of employees could talk constructively about the topic within the organization. An extensive syllabus drew on current literature and addressed a set of related issues:

1. Students and school discontinuity
2. Living in the inner city
3. Demographics and the urban condition
4. Race and schooling
5. Culturally appropriate schooling/Afrocentric pedagogy
6. School and school district organization
   (as it contributes to and impedes effective schooling)
7. Effective teaching and learning (research-based models)

The seminar met for eight days over a two week period, six hours per day. Meetings employed a wide variety of group process techniques designed to assist the group in dealing with provocative and controversial material. For the 25 participants the seminar was a deeply emotional, evocative and informative experience. The group has determined to continue working on the issues, and to think about how the entire organization might deal with them.

Redirecting Special Education

During the 1990-91 school year I met monthly with the special education staff (one administrator, six supervisors, and 15 psychologists) to explore our differing perceptions on how students with special needs were being served by the programs in which they had been placed. So that we could develop a critical perspective on the programs we were managing or supervising, we read and discussed material which focused on such local and national special education issues as the following:

- At this point special education placement is virtually permanent; although federal and state policy call for mainstreaming (integration) and exit (return to regular education), in practice more than 95 percent of special needs students never return to regular education.
- Both locally and nationally African American and Hispanic students are disproportionately placed in special programs.
- Special education placement greatly increases the possibility that students will drop out of school.
- There is some evidence that students' IQ's decline in relation to the length of their special education placement.
- There is little evidence that participation in programs for "mildly" handicapped students has benefit; special education programs have rarely been evaluated over extended periods and special needs students are generally exempted from state and local assessment programs (see Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; and Lytle, 1988 regarding this and previous statements).
- On the other hand, programs for low incidence handicaps (e.g., visually impaired, severely impaired) have made dramatic strides in improving services and demonstrating benefit.

In addition,

- Per pupil costs are significantly higher than for regular education students, and
- The administrative overhead cost is generally high (in our district almost $700 per special needs pupil).

Needless to say, these were not easy issues for a group of professionals whose careers have been dedicated to special needs students. As an outgrowth of these discussions, we decided in September 1991, to conduct an in-depth study of special education programs in the region during the 1991-92 school year. By consensus the focal question for the study was determined to be: ***What's special about special education?***

From October through early April, we observed in classrooms and talked with school staff representatives at the 36 elementary and middle schools in the region, as well as the three comprehensive high schools. The supervisor and psychologist responsible for a particular school and I visited that school for a half-day to observe in special education (and sometimes regular) classrooms. Generally we observed in classrooms designated by the principal, counselor and special education staff; occasionally they would accompany us on our class visits. We spent from 30 minutes to two hours in each class. The observations themselves were loosely ethnographic; no checklist or form was used. In this process we observed more than 300 classes. Following the observations we would meet with interested school staff and the principal, often for lunch, and discuss the purposes for the study and their perceptions and concerns regarding special education.

From these observations and discussions emerged an evolutionary/running synthesis of the characteristics of special education programs, and of related organizational and instructional issues. These were incorporated in a document which was shared with teachers and principals at each school we visited, and revised based on our discussions. This process was intended to make the study as open and collaborative as possible. (Detailed analysis of the data from these visits and observations is still in process.)

In June we met to address the question, "How can Special Education contribute to the accomplishment of the School District's instructional goals?" We reviewed the results of the year-long "What's Special" study and engaged in a series of planning activities dealing both with school programs and with regional office services.

Regional Staff Team Building

One outgrowth of this study, and of related activities with other members of the regional office support staff, was the recognition that we were working in ways too bounded by our formal job definitions. The region has 55 professional employees, including 16 psychologists, 6 supervisors, 8 attendance workers, 8 support teachers, 4 parent trainers, a nursing supervisor, a researcher, 4 curriculum and instruction supervisors, and other administrators. (The staffing design for the office has been determined by a series of central office decisions over a period of many years; the regional office organization is ***not*** based on needs identified by the schools the region includes.)

Early in the 1992-93 school year the entire group met to consider how it might begin to re-think the ways it works with schools. One thing we quickly recognized was that we did not all know each other, nor the work that those of us in different positions do. The agenda which we set for ourselves included several components:

- Knowing who people are and what they do
  Comparing the ways in which we work in schools
  Being critical of the shape of our jobs

- Organizing by school service teams
  Trying some service team meetings with schools

- Learning about new programs and policies
  (e.g., outcomes-based assessment)

- Managing regional office resources

  (e.g., people, vacancies, money, space, technology)

A volunteer planning group, which included representatives of the various job categories, agreed to assume responsibility for addressing the agenda.

Conclusion

Research for Better Schools has posited four research-based themes for its work on restructuring to educate the urban learner:

- Cultural diversity and learning -- acknowledging and using cultural diversity

- Unrecognized Ability — underdeveloped potential

- Enhancing ability — valuing effort

- Resilience — surviving and prospering despite limited support

In many senses these themes apply equally to the ways in which our region has been trying to direct its work with principals, and through them, with schools. We have used the cultural, gender and experience

differences of the members of the principals' group as one source of "puzzlement" for creating conversation and promoting inquiry. We have assumed that principals and support staff have both unrecognized ability and underdeveloped potential, and that such activities as collaborative action research will make advantage of these attributes. By devoting at least two-thirds of every staff meeting to developmental activities, we hope to enhance capabilities. We support those who make a good faith effort to improve teaching and learning in their schools. And we recognize that the urban principalship is a lonely and demanding job, so that those who succeed in it can be considered as themselves having resilience. They have survived and often succeeded despite limited support.

By working to become a practitioner inquiry community, we are also developing the characteristics of a learning to learn organization. The presumption is that our experience can and will be extended into schools and classrooms. Whether we pass that test is the seminal question.

Exhibit 1

Regional Activities 1990–93

School Year	Regional Superindent	Principals [N = 36]	Regional Staff [N = 55]
1990–91	• Student shadow study		• Special education study
1991–92	• Special education study	• Collaborative student shadow study • Focus group study of report card marks	
1992–93	• Summer seminar on race and education for teachers, principals and parents (n=25) • Shared governance and the role of the principal	• Principals study • Teachers teach principals about new curricula	• Who are we? What do we each do? • How can we organize in service teams?

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THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLASSROOM, CULTURAL, AND NATURAL SYSTEMS ECOLOGIES: UNDERSTANDING THE DEEP CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE AS A BASIS OF TEACHER DECISIONMAKING IN URBAN SETTINGS

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Using the metaphor of an "ecology" to understand the classroom helps illuminate the interactive nature of the message exchanges that collectively constitute the intended and unintended communication and learning in urban classrooms. More specifically, Gregory Bateson's way of understanding an ecology de-centers the idea of the classroom as a collection of individual students, and a teacher who brings the students' behavior and thought processes under the control of a rationally organized lesson and classroom management plan. Writes Bateson, "The total self-corrective unit which processes information, or, as I say, 'thinks' and 'acts' and 'decides,' is a ***system*** whose boundaries do not at all coincide with the boundaries either of the body or of what is popularly called the 'self' or 'consciousness': and it is important to notice that there are ***multiple*** differences between the thinking system and the 'self' as popularly conceived" (1972, p. 319). "The individual mind," he continues, "is immanent, but not only in the body. It is immanent also in the pathways and messages outside the body" (1972, p. 461).

Another way to understand Bateson's ecology of mind is to recognize that the ecology of the classroom is part of a larger cultural ecology that includes distinctive economic/political/social patterns, and that this cultural ecology (with dominant and marginalized sub-groups) is an integral part of the information and energy exchange webs that we generally refer to as natural systems. A further extension of the ecology metaphor is that past cultural/natural systems relationships are present (largely at an unconscious and culturally coded level) in the "information pathways" that influence thought and communication patterns in the classroom, and that what happens in the classroom will have implications for future generations who will be equally dependent upon the life-sustaining characteristics of natural systems (Brown, 1991; Daly, 1991; Orr, 1992; Bowers, 1993). To restate the interconnection in its most basic terms: if students representing minority and dominant cultural groups are encouraged by well intentioned but naive teachers to learn the cultural patterns (including attitudes toward technology, consumerism, and what constitutes high status knowledge) that are contributing to the degradation of life-sustaining natural systems, these teachers will be contributing, in effect, to increasing both short and long term health and economic risks — which will have the most severe impact on minority cultures. Not viewing the classroom as a subsystem of larger systems that connect past and future, and as part of the symbolic systems that interact with the information/energy exchanges of natural systems, makes as much sense today as holding to the view of a flat earth in an age when the earth was being circumnavigated.

Classroom as an Ecology

Given this interactive and interdependent view of ecological systems, I would like to focus on the curricular and pedagogical issues in the urban classroom. Classrooms interactions (communication, or as Bateson puts it in terms of the most basic patterns: "difference which makes a difference") and learning are multidimensional and involve many pathways. While there are significant, individualistic forms of expression, most of the communication and learning involves cultural patterns that are part of the participants' "taken for granted" cultural knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Geertz, 1973; Goodenough, 1981; Bowers, 1984). The critical challenge, in terms of teaching and learning in a classroom ecology that involves students from different cultural groups (gender and age differences should also be considered as involving cultural differences), is to match teaching and curricular decisions to the student's primary cultural group, as Roland Tharp and others so clearly have pointed out (Orr, 1987; Tharp, 1988; Bowers & Flinders, 1990). Learning the patterns of the student's primary culture requires both sustained experience within the minority culture, as well as background theoretical knowledge. The latter will help illuminate patterns and processes that might otherwise be missed because of the taken-for-granted interpretative frameworks that teachers bring to their encounters with other cultural groups. In effect, grounded theory provides the language for naming, and thus obtaining, conceptual distance from aspects of experience that otherwise would go largely unrecognized. For example, many traditional

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taken-for-granted patterns were more easily recognized when they were named as racist and sexist. Background theoretical knowledge is absolutely essential, if teachers are to understand the communication and cognitive patterns of other cultural groups and, just as importantly, to understand the ways in which their own curricular and pedagogical decisions mediate the cultural learning processes in the classroom. The specific areas of theoretical background knowledge essential for culturally responsive teaching include: the metaphorical nature of language and thought, the nature of primary socialization and how it contributes to communicative competence, how metacommunication patterns about relationships influence the possibilities for learning, the cultural coding characteristics of spoken and written discourse, and how the balancing of power and solidarity are worked out in the classroom. Background knowledge of these processes, and how they get worked out by different cultural groups, will help teachers recognize more easily their own cultural patterns, the distinctive patterns that reflect the student's primary culture, and the cultural patterns that may be shared by diverse cultural groups.

The pedagogical and curricular implications of the background knowledge about the metaphorical/cultural nature of thought, primary socialization, metacommunication patterns, spoken and written discourse, framing and footing, and power and solidarity, needs to be understood in terms of the cultural patterns students reenact in classroom settings (Bowers & Flinders, 1990, 1991). Because the classroom is an ecology of interactive patterns ("difference which makes a difference" in tone of voice, gaze, length of pause, use of space, metaphorical construction, printed word, averting of eye contact, overlapping talk, etc.) it is impossible to reduce decisions about teaching and curriculum to prefigured techniques. But there are certain processes that can now be recognized in terms of how they influence the student's self-image, sense of cultural identity, and development of the cognitive/linguistic basis of communicative competence. Reinforcing the dominant cultural view that language is a conduit for sending objective information, representing aspects of culture in a limited and highly context-independent vocabulary, and representing the "rational process" as culture-free and individually-centered, lead to a form of socialization that will actually make students dependent upon those groups who posses the power to encode knowledge in ways that hide its social origins.

Bringing together the background knowledge necessary for teacher decisionmaking in the classroom ecology, with knowledge of the students' primary culture, should be the central responsibility of teacher education programs. But, as only a few teacher education programs are just now beginning to address the problems of teaching in a culturally diverse society there is a major need for ongoing staff development programs that address the deficiencies in the knowledge base of both new and tenured teachers.

Recommendations for Developing Teachers' Deep Cultural Background Knowledge

As the forthcoming recommendations are not likely to be addressed in most teacher education programs, even in programs sensitive to culturally responsive teaching and learning, it is strongly urged that the following aspects of the cultural reproduction process be made a primary focus of staff development programs. Each aspect of culture identified is especially crucial to culturally responsive teaching, and to being able to recognize how curricular decisions in the ecology of the classroom relate to the larger and more critically important cultural/natural systems ecologies. As there is a vast literature relating to each of the aspects of culture identified, only the more theoretically important and accessible books are listed.

1. ***Culture and the formation of taken-for-granted beliefs:***
   Key concepts: How culture becomes part of the student's natural attitude and influences her/his thought and communication patterns; the role of language in constituting the intersubjective self (self-identity and cognitive patterns); the authority of taken-for-granted beliefs and why they are so difficult to recognize.

   Readings:

   Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1967). ***The Social Construction of Reality***, pp. 19-143.
   Bowers, C. A. (1984). ***The Promise of Theory: Education and the Politics of Cultural Change,*** pp. 31-48.
   Bowers, C. A. & Flinders, D. (1990). ***Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture and Thought***, pp. 91-126.

Goodenough, W. (1981). ***Culture, Language, and Society,*** pp. 46-95.
Hall, E. (1977). ***Beyond Culture.***

2. ***Role of Tradition in Cultural Continuity and Change***
Key Concepts: The existence of tradition in everyday life; difference between fad and tradition; how change involves the development of traditional knowledge and practices; the nature of anti tradition traditions; the myth of tradition as unchanging (i.e., traditionalism); how traditions change from within and from without; how traditions are lost and why they cannot be recovered in their original form; how traditions are invented to legitimate new forms of political and cultural dominance; the anti tradition traditions of modern, technologically oriented cultures.

Readings:

Bowers, C. A. (1987). ***Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education,*** pp. 53-78.
Hobsbawn, E. & Ranger, T. (1983). ***The Invention of Tradition.***
Shils, E. (1981). ***Tradition.***

3. ***Metaphorical Nature of the Culture/Language/Thought Connection***
Key Concepts: Cultural nature of metaphorical thinking; how the root metaphors of a culture influence the process of analogic thinking (including the use of analogic thinking in the curriculum); how the use of iconic metaphors in the thought process reproduce earlier culturally specific patterns of analogic thinking (that is, how language thinks us as we think within the language); how the metaphorical nature of language and thought can lead to forms of cultural domination; how metaphorical thinking contributes to misunderstanding the cultural aspects of the ecological crisis.

Readings:

Bowers, C. A. (1993). ***Education Cultural Myths and the Ecological Crisis: Toward Deep Changes,*** pp. 9-34.
Bowers, C. A. & Flinders, D. (1990). ***Responsive Teaching,*** pp. 30-60.
Brown, R. (1978). ***A Poetic for Sociology,*** pp. 77-139.
Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). ***Metaphors We Live By.***

4. ***Cultural Mediating Characteristics of Spoken and Written Discourse***
Key Concepts: How written discourse fosters a sense of individualism and a de-contextualized pattern of thinking; the cognitive and social patterns reinforced through spoken discourse; what teachers should understand about the curricular implications of oral and print-based discourse.

Readings:

Bowers, C. A. & Flinders, D. ***Responsive Teaching,*** pp. 157-177.
Havelock, E. (1986). ***The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present.***
Olson, D., Torrance, N., & Hildyard, A. (Eds.). (1986). ***Literacy Language, and Learning: The Nature and Consequences of Reading and Writing*** — especially the chapters by Deborah Tannen and Wallace Chafe.

5. ***Cultural Mediating Characteristics of Technology (especially computers)***
Key Concepts: How technology mediates (amplifies and reduces) aspects of human/cultural experience; the cultural non-neutrality of technology, the connection between computers and cultures that privilege written over spoken discourse; cultural forms of knowledge that cannot be communicated through the computer.

Readings:

Bowers, C. A. (1993, May). ***Critical Essays on Education, Modernity, and the Recovery of the Ecological Imperative*** — especially the chapters on computers, culture, and ideology.
Bowers, C. A. (1988). ***The Cultural Dimensions of Educational Computing: Understanding the Non-Neutrality of Technology.***
Ellul, J. (1964). ***The Technological Society*** — especially chapters 1 and 2.
Garson, B. (1988). ***The Electronic Sweatshop.***
Ihde, D. (1979). ***Technic and Praxis,*** pp. 53-65.

6. ***Ideology as Expression of Specific Cultural Orientation***
Key Concepts: Ideology as expression of deepest symbolic foundations that guide thought and everyday cultural practices; how debates over educational reform are framed by different expressions of liberal and conservative ideologies; how the educational expression of liberal ideologies (emancipatory, neo-romantic, and technicist traditions) privilege change over tradition, and the individual over community; how modernizing ideologies contribute to educational practices that are deepening the ecological crisis; ideology and the content of the curriculum in a culturally diverse urban classroom.

Readings:

Geertz, C. (1973). ***Interpretations of Culture,*** pp. 193-233.
Bowers, C. A. (1987). ***Elements of a Post Liberal Theory of Education.***
Bell, D. (1978). ***The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism,*** pp. 1-119.
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7. ***Characteristics of Ecologically Sustainable Cultures (and by extension, characteristics of unsustainable cultures)***
Key Concepts: The connection between beliefs and practices of the dominant culture and the ecological crisis; how curriculum materials reinforce the cultural myth of progress and technological empowerment; how modern cultural assumptions have led to the denigration of ecologically centered cultures; the identification and reinforcement within the curriculum of beliefs and practices of urban cultural groups that contribute to long term ecological sustainability.

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